



LHS

The Lackawanna
Historical Society
Journal

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Fall 2013

Miners' Last Stand

by Jack Smiles

On August 4, 1953, the day after his 23rd birthday, Scranton Miners' pitcher Dick Welteroth hit a home run in Elmira, one of two he hit in a 10-year career in the minor and major leagues. "We went out for a steak dinner that night," Welteroth, now 86 and living in Williamsport, where he was born and raised, recalled in a phone conversation.

Even though Welteroth lost the game 5-2, the home run was worth celebrating, because not much else about the Miners' 1953 season was. The Miners finished last in the Eastern League, 53 games out of first place, with a 51-100 record. They drew 62,256 fans for 75 home dates, lost \$12,000 and brought an end to professional baseball in Scranton after a 67-year-history dating back to 1886.

The end for Scranton Miners baseball came 60 years ago at Artillery Field in Wilkes-Barre in the second game of a day-night doubleheader on September 7, 1953. At least the Miners went out winners.

They won the first game in Scranton in the afternoon, 4-0, and the second in Wilkes-Barre that night 10-4. Attendance was 835 in Scranton and 1,076 in Wilkes-Barre. Michael Sichko, an outfielder batting third for the Miners, was 4-for-5 in the last game.

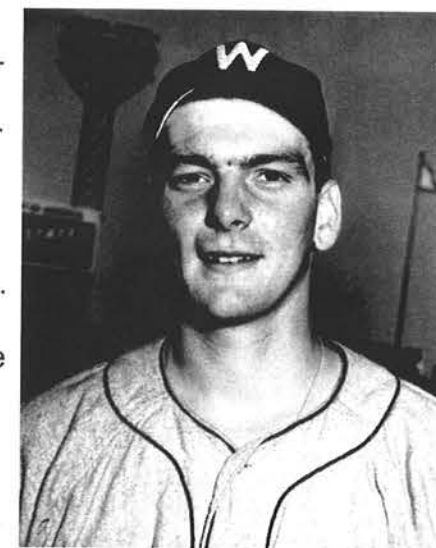
Sichko, who was born in Pennsylvania, is 88. After leaving Scranton, he moved to Minnesota to play for the semi-pro Albert Lea Packers. He stayed in Minnesota where he met his wife and is currently residing at an assisted living facility. He doesn't recall that final game in Scranton. His best memory of Scranton is about the female telephone operators. In those days every phone

call went through a telephone operator. Sichko and some of the other players lived in rooms above the office where the operators worked. The girls let the players make free phone calls.

"I talked to my mother in Uniontown. When I told her how I made the call she gave me the dickens in Slavish. 'I don't care, don't call me anymore.' To her that was like stealing."

Sichko said the Miners manager Morrie Aderholt, who played in the major leagues during World War II, was a players' manager. "He was all right. He made my brother Bill the batboy and he got to travel with us." Bill later played football at Pitt with Mike Ditka.

Welteroth liked Aderholt as well. "Aderholt corrected ball players right away when we did wrong, but quietly, not in front of anybody." Welteroth came to Scranton from the Washington Senators; who signed him in 1946 when he was 17 and a senior at St. Mary's high school in Williamsport. Welteroth pitched for the Senators in 1948, '49 and '50 when they averaged 96 losses a season. St. Mary's didn't have a baseball team and Welteroth pitched in the high-caliber amateur West Branch League. His big break



Dick Welteroth

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| SUN., NOV. 17, 2 PM | DORFLINGER ENGRAVING FACT OR FICTION
by Kurt Reed at the Catlin House. (see page 10) |
| SAT., NOV. 23, 10 AM - 2PM | EVERHART MUSEUM COMMUNITY DAY
At the Anthracite Heritage Museum (see page 5) |
| SUN. DEC. 1, NOON | ORNAMENT MAKING WORKSHOP
Led by Arlene O'Malley at Catlin House |
| THURS. DEC. 5, 7 PM | MEMBERS-ONLY HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
at the Catlin House. (see page 5) |
| FRI. DEC. 6, 7 PM | HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE at the Catlin House. (see page 5) |
| JAN. DETAILS TBD | MINING HISTORY PROGRAM AND EXHIBIT at Catlin House |
| FEB. 28/MAR. 1-2 | DINNER BY DESIGN Details TBA |
| MARCH | RAILROAD PERSPECTIVES Part 2 exhibit at Catlin House |
| MAR. 15 | SAWDUST TRAIL exhibit at Scranton Post Office Building & Catlin House |
| MAR. 22, 2 PM | RAILROAD PERSPECTIVES Part 2 gallery talk & print-making workshop |

Also don't miss **World War I: The Great War**,
a sampling for the Society's Collections on display Catlin House this winter!

A Word from the President...

*H*ello everyone

When you think about the past, study and research it, you can't help but realize that we all have so very much in common. In so many ways, we are alike, even though we come from different backgrounds. Yesterday's history teaches us many lessons that can guide us along as we create tomorrow's history. That is something to celebrate and we should all strive, in the best ways possible, to create a history that is positive and beneficial to others.

For me, the Lackawanna Historical Society is an organization that demonstrates this thinking. All of us who are connected to the LHS share its mission to preserve, collect and present the history of Lackawanna County. What we don't share are the same backgrounds, experiences, amounts of available time and age. That being said, we manage to move forward and improve our goals to develop a history as a community partner that is well-received and make a positive contribution to the quality of life we share. In order to do this, I am most interested in knowing how our members feel about the programs we offer and to get your feedback.

In June, we conducted the very popular Historic House Tour in the Hill. The suggestion has been made to move the tour to a different section of Scranton. What do you think?

Coming in the early Spring of 2014 will be the 4th edition of "Dinner by Design", a unique visual display of venues for entertaining. Our plan is to take it on the road to a new location. We would welcome your suggestions on creative ideas to add.

In recognition of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, this year's annual dinner, held recently at the Century Club, included 19 Civil War generals, President Abraham Lincoln and a 15-piece military band. Do you have any suggestions for next year?

In May, the LHS will present the 5th edition of the fun quiz show, "You Live Here, You Should Know This". Last year's winning team, playing for the first time, was from the Scranton Times. We welcome and encourage our members and friend to form a four-member team to play. We would enjoy hearing from you so you can help us create some history. Email us at lackawannahistory@gmail.com. Stay well, be involved and enjoy the coming holiday season.

Respectfully yours,
Michael
Michael Gilmartin

About Membership... Membership privileges include unlimited access to the Society library, 10% discount in our bookstore, advance notice and invitations to all Society activities, special members-only programs and the quarterly newsletter. Attached is a membership form you can use to renew your membership or give to a friend or neighbor who is interested in joining. Please return it to: The Lackawanna Historical Society at 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10	NAME _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35	
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$45	ADDRESS _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$75	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$150	
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Corporate	\$250	TELEPHONE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Corporate	\$500	EMAIL _____

The Lackawanna Historical Society 2013

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Olivia Bernardi Computer Assistant
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James and Gay Clifford Caretakers

The Lackawanna Historical Society is a 501(C) (3) non-profit organization which is dedicated to keeping vital the history of Lackawanna County. It is supported in part by the Catlin Memorial Trust, Lackawanna County, and membership dues. Regular hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 am to 5 pm and Saturdays noon to 3 pm.

The Lackawanna Historical Society Journal is published by the Lackawanna Historical Society, 232 Monroe Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510 Tel. (570) 344-3841. Address questions to Mary Ann Moran Savakinus at lackawannahistory@gmail.com

Members of the Society receive this publication. Membership contributions are \$35 and up for Individuals, \$45 for Families, and \$125 for Organizations. Special Silver and Gold Corporate memberships are available.

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"Let's Get Wired!"

Commit now to keep the Catlin House wired! The cost of the Catlin House Electrical and HVAC upgrades is \$523,180. Please join us in taking care of one of the area's architectural treasures and make your commitment today.

Make your pledge today by using this form. Check payable to the LHS Restoration Fund and return to:

Lackawanna Historical Society
232 Monroe Avenue
Scranton, PA 18510

MEMORIALS

In Memory of Mary Patterson

Arley Wholesale

Florence Brown

Ken & Cheryl Freye

Sarah Jane McHale

Lynn Nichols

In Memory of Mildred A. Muller

Warren Cox

Barbara Muller

About Memorial Gifts to the Society

Contributions to the Lackawanna Historical Society in the name of individuals are placed in a Memorial Fund and are not used for general operations. If you would like to make a contribution to the Society in the name of an individual, please send your check payable to the Society including name and address of person(s) for whom memorial is made. All contributions to the Lackawanna Historical Society are tax deductible to the fullest extent that the law provides.

LACKAWANNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Capital Campaign Pledge Form

I am pleased to support the Lackawanna Historical Society with my contribution indicated below to upgrade the Catlin House electrical and HVAC systems:

Please Print

Levels of Giving

Name(s) _____		
Address _____		
City _____	State _____	Zip Code _____
Phone (day) _____		Phone (evening) _____
Email _____		

- ☐ Amps \$3000 and over
- ☐ Ohms \$1000 - \$2999
- ☐ Joules \$500 - \$999
- ☐ Watts \$100 - \$499
- ☐ Volts under \$100

The Lackawanna Historical Society is a 501 (C) 3 organization. All contributions are tax deductible in accordance with Pennsylvania state law. Your check is your receipt.



Like us on Facebook to see our new weekly series, *Look Who's Hanging around the Catlin House,*



a spotlight on some of the portraits, like this one, on display at the Catlin House. Visit our Facebook page often to learn more about the Catlin House, and to find out about upcoming events at the Society and our partner sites!



Dorflinger Engraving: Fact or Fiction?

Join Dorflinger Glass expert
and local historian Kurt Reed
for a lecture on Sunday, November 17
at 2 pm at the Catlin House.

A debate has been raging for decades about whether the Dorflinger Glass Works, in nearby White Mills, had its own engraving department. In his presentation, Mr. Reed will address the early history of Dorflinger glass, and will present evidence to lay the engraving controversy to rest.

Call the Lackawanna Historical Society at 570-344-3841
for more information or to make reservations.

Community Calendar

Anthracite Heritage Museum Annual Meeting

On Saturday, November 16 the Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum at McDade Park will host Dominic Keating and Richard Suraci of Avanti Cigar as the speaker for their Annual Meeting. A luncheon will begin at noon at the museum, followed by a brief business meeting. The Avanti presentation will begin at 2 p.m.

Call the Anthracite Museum at 570-963-4804
for reservations.



Research Request

Scott Lowe is making a documentary about the days of record manufacturing at Capitol and the Scranton Button Company. He has contacted LHS to request that our members share any knowledge or photographs about the Scranton Button Company and/or Capitol Records. Scott has a background in radio and currently works for Cumulus Media in Wilkes-Barre at 97BHT and 97.9X FM. He has been involved with various film and TV projects, including a feature length fictional drama called "Tapped", available on Amazon DVD. If anyone would be willing to talk about either company on video contact Scott at: lowemusic@hotmail.com or (267) 261-3291

In the Catlin House...

LHS SUMMER/FALL SEASON IN REVIEW

The last few months have been extremely busy for the Lackawanna Historical Society and we would like to take some time to thank our friends, members, and volunteers for their great work in making our programs successful.

On August 24th, **The Hilton Scranton, Big House Tobacco Outlet** and **USACigarStore.com** conducted the inaugural *Electric City Smoke* to benefit the Society. More than 80 people attended this unique event that included our friends from Scranton's own **Avanti Cigars**.

On Friday, September 13th, the LHS kicked off two weekends of spooky fun with *Scranton After Dark's Trolley of Terror* and paranormal tours through Scranton's downtown on a horse-drawn wagon. The wagon was provided by our friends at **Brook Valley Farms** and 15 LHS volunteers dressed to scare with the guidance of "Haunted Scranton" author **Tony Bernardi** and his wife **Olivia** with coordination assistance from **Bob Savakinus**.

Also in September, a very special program was hosted at the **Rossetti family** residence in Scranton's Hill section, when "If You Can Play Scranton" author **Nancy McDonald** presented some of the highlights of our city's musical history with interspersed performances of selections that represented some of the artists who played here. *Congrats to Nancy on recently receiving the International Book Award for the category History/Media Entertainment for her book!*

Columbus Day Weekend brought much excitement when the LHS hosted its annual dinner at the **Century Club** with a special program by the **Confederation of Union Generals and President Lincoln**. 115 people attended and were able to engage one-on-one with many of the generals during dinner, which was provided by **Accentuate Catering**. Thanks to LHS Assistant Director **Sarah Piccini**, **Ann Marie O'Hara** and **Leni Piasky** and **Century Club** members **Cathy Chamon** and **Dottie Bosley** for their great work on the program and to our friends **Tom Cipriano** and **General Pickett** who also joined us for the event!

Thanks to LHS volunteers **Leni Piasky**, **Joann Kavulich** and **Juliana Piccini** who conducted this summer's *Downtown Walking Tours*. Tours were offered two Saturdays each month and highlighted some the Downtown's beautiful buildings. Thanks also to **Juliana** for leading the *Bosco's Friends Helping Friends* fundraiser and for the volunteers who sold tickets including **Samantha Gonzalez**, **Joe McTiernan**, **Jim & Gay Clifford** and our favorite balloon artist **Dr. Cornelius**.

We are very grateful to all of the LHS Volunteers who continue to do so much to help the Society present interesting programs and events that promote local history.



NEW MEMBERS Student

Joshua Richberg, Old Forge
Robert Schmidt, Scranton

Individual

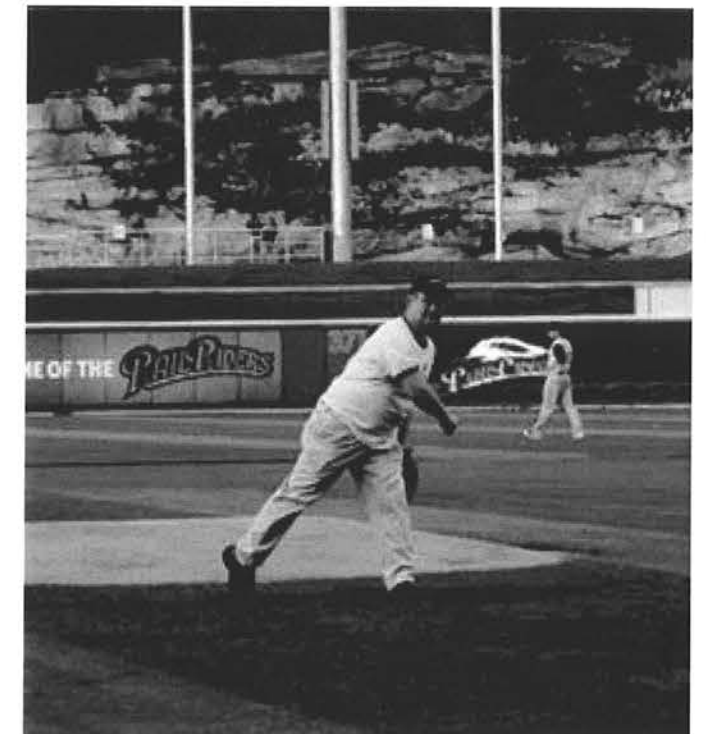
Marita Kearney, Scranton
Carolyn Matala, Eynon
Monica Michalczyk, Dickson City
Alice Micone, Scranton
Jeanette Wagner, Scranton
Marie Wielebinski, Taylor
William J. Young, Scranton

Family

Charlie & Pamela Fleischmann, Newton, MA
Kristin White, Scranton

Contributing

Patrick & Karen Dempsey, Jefferson Twp.



Thanks also to **Bob Savakinus** for throwing the first pitch at the **SWB RailRiders** game at PNC Field on August 13th when the Lackawanna Historical Society was the *Community Organization of the Night*.

Congratulations to our Volunteers!

Alan Sweeney Award Recipient Ella Rayburn



Ella Rayburn, center, with Society members Richard Leonori, Eddie Smith., and Linda Lynett

The Alan Sweeney Award recognizes those who work to interpret local history and promote the heritage of the Lackawanna Valley. This year's recipient, LHS curator Ella Rayburn, started this work in 1990, as curator of Steamtown National Historic Site. In 1996 she joined the Society's Board of Trustees and established the Society's Collections Management Policy and Collections Committee. This committee maintains LHS collections and works to promote and share these collections throughout the community, including exhibits at the Scranton Federal Building.

Ella serves as a member of Scranton's Historical Architectural Review Board and is active with the city's architectural heritage association. She served on the Board of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority, and is an active volunteer at Trinity Congregational Church, where she recently presented an organizational history to the membership.

In October, she was honored with an alumni achievement award from Fort Hays State University in Kansas where she began her career. We congratulate Ella on this honor and look forward to working with her for many years to come!

Congratulations, Ella!

Volunteer of the Year Leni Piasky



Each year we recognize a volunteer for dedicated service to the Society. Leni has been active with the Society since 1995. Since that time, she has been a dedicated member who attends many of our programs and events and has always expressed a real interest in Lackawanna County History and the Society.

She has been involved in various LHS projects and programs. Since 2004, she has been a docent at the Catlin House, giving tours to students and other groups. She can also be seen leading downtown architectural walking tours during the summer months. She has been a volunteer gardener, helping to get the grounds ready for spring. If you've seen our Catlin House brochure, you've seen some of her hard work.

As a retired employee of State Farm insurance, she extends her support of the Society through the company's matching program, for which we are grateful.

Leni is a familiar face at many special events, where she can usually be found staffing the registration table. We are very grateful to Leni for her continued interest and support and all that she has done for the Society.

Congratulations, Leni!

Watts (\$100-\$499) *continued*

Violet Kelly
Lawrence & Judith Kennedy
Tom Kingsley
Michael & Jennie Knies
Arlene Kohl
Lois Kretsche
John Krisa, Esq.
Chester & Deilsie Kulesa
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Langan
Lee Electric Supply Co.
Ellen Lodwick
George & Patti Lynett
Scott & Libby Lynett
Nancy McDonald
Thomas J. McHugh
Thomas McLane
Matthew D. Mackie, Jr.
Richard & Sally Marquardt
Sharleen & Dennis Martin
Midlantic Engineering Inc.
John & Jennifer Ochman
Vera Jean Pace

Joseph Pascoe
People's Neighborhood Bank
PNC Bank
Pesavento Monuments
Leni Piasky
Raymond R. & Andrea J. Pilch
Hank & Barbara Platt
John & Silke Reddington
Mary Rhodes
Jean Shields
James & Barbara Shuta
Erin & Joseph Speicher
Deirdre Taylor
Gene & Joan Turko
University of Scranton
James & Sharon Vipond
Jack & Liana Walsh
Timothy D. Welby, M.D.
David & Janet Wenzel
James Wert
Kristen Yarmey
Thomas Yeager

Volts (under \$100)

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James Benetzky
Michael G. Bufalino
William & Susan Calpin
CECO Associates
Carol Chisdak
Mike Chmiola
Ray Ceccotti
Shirley Cottrino
Robert & Sharon Cuff
Thomas Dailey
Bob Durkin
Robert N. Eckersley
Daniel Emick
John Anthony Farkas, Jr.
Rabbi Michael & Doris Fine
Joshua Felter
Diane Fritz
William H. Fritz
Beth Gallagher
Eugene & Lois Gallagher
Anne Gershey
Dorothy Gordon
Joyce Hatala
Richard Healey
Jack Horvath
Alan & Polly Hughes
Barbara Jean Jones
Steve and Joanne Kavulich
Dale & Joyce Keklock
Judi Keller

Delores & Edward Kownaski
Dennis & Mary Kryzanowski
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Kumpas
Rudolph Kunz
David & Anita Lohin
Mr. & Mrs. Richard MacGregor
Conor Malone
Ralph J. Marino
Pat Marion
Mark & Michele McDade
Mary Lynn McDermott
Chris McWilliams
Gail Morgan
Gino Mori
Shawn Murphy
Linda O'Leary
Ed Osman
Juliana Piccini
Alana Roberts
Francis Ruane
Paul Rudnick
Julia Savakinus
Elsie Schwartzar
Linda Scott
John & Susan Sheerin
Doug Smith
Peter Smith
Pat Tobin
Martin A. Toth, Esq.
Sally Venesky
Marilyn Wentland

Let's Get Wired!!!

The Lackawanna Historical Society kicked off its Capital Campaign in October 2012. Our campaign marks the centennial of the Catlin House, the Society's home. Funds raised go to preserve the Catlin House by upgrading its wiring and HVAC systems. As of July 31, campaign pledges total \$103,238.

We appreciate everyone's support and hope that you will help us continue our efforts by spreading the word about the campaign! If you have not yet made a pledge, please use the form on page 11.

Amps (\$3000 and over)

Dr. John & Nancy Farkas
Mort & Sue Fuller
Frieder Foundation
Arlene Devereaux O'Hara
Dalida A. O'Malley

Richard Leonori
Linda Lynett
PHMC Keystone Grant
Ella Rayburn
William J. Rinaldi, Esq.

Ohms (\$1000-\$2999)

Joseph F. Cimini
Elaine Carroll
Charles Connell
Donald Frederickson, Jr., Esq.

Joe & Fran Garvey
Michael & Nada Gilmartin
Tom & Eileen Griffiths
Tom & Paula Horlacher
Jeff Kiefer

Jane E. McGowty
Morey & Sondra Myers
Penn Security Bank & Trust
Greg & Chris Posly

Joules (\$500-\$999)

Bill & Bridget Conlogue
Doug & Shannon Forrer
Paul & Adrienne Horger
Theodore Horger
Tom & Fafi Karam

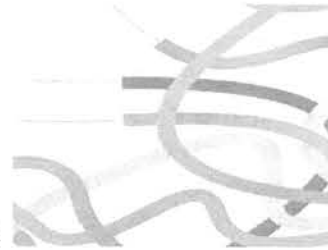
Dominic Keating
Mary McDonald
Mary Jane Memolo
Roswell S. Patterson

Nick & Sue Petula
Quandel Construction Group
Dennis Ruddy
Robert & Mary Ann Savakinus
Elaine Shepard

Watts (\$100-\$499)

Irwin & Donna Adler
William J. Antognoli
John Beck
Olivia & Tony Bernardi
Faye & Richard Bishop
Dr. & Mrs. Edward & Regina Boehm
Peter & Sally Bohlin
Bohlin, Cywinski, Jackson
Conrad & Dorothy Bosley
F. Warren and Carol Fells Breig
Maureen Brennan
Edward & Nancy Burke
Gerald Burns
Laurie Cadden
Patrick A. Calvey
Carbondale Historical Society
Carpenter's Local Union 645
John G. Carling
Cemetery Association of Dunmore
Bonnie Ciero
Brian Clark

Jim & Gay Clifford
Mary Theresa Connolly
Willis Conover
Lynn M. Conrad
Cruciani Family
Cathy Cullen
Fidelity Bank
FNCB
Ernest J. Gazda
Natalie Gelb
Ann Gilmartin
William & Theresa Graziano
Andrew & Mary Hailstone
Natalie Henkelman
Hinerfield Commercial Realty
Dr. Frank X. J. Homer
Jean Horger
IBEW Local #81
Mary Ann Jacquinet
Jermyn Historical Society
Robert T. Kelly



Christmas is Coming to the Catlin House!

As always, the Lackawanna Historical Society will celebrate the holidays with festive flair. Join us on Sunday, December 1 at Noon for a Victorian ornament-making workshop led by Arlene O'Malley to get a jump on your holiday decorating! Or admire the traditional holiday decorations and a special German Toy exhibit featuring the collection of LHS member Uta Dreher at the Catlin House during the Members-Only Holiday Open House on Thursday, December 5 at 7 p.m. Enjoy food, wine and live music, as well as horse-drawn carriage rides around the Downtown offered by our friends at Brook Valley Farms. We will also elect the Society's Trustee Class of 2016.



On Friday, December 6, the Catlin House will be open to the public at 7 p.m. for more Christmas festivities. Wassail and sweet treats, stories and games will be part of this old-fashioned Christmas celebration. Come join us!

LHS Partners with Everhart Museum for Gallery ONE Show!



Back row, L-R: Margie Young and Erica Rogler, Dietrich Theater; Mary Ruth Burke, Luzerne County Historical Society; Bob and Betty Smith, Susquehanna County Historical Society; Roxanne Smith and Carol Dunn, Wayne County Historical Society.

Front row, L-R: Brian Fulton, Scranton Times-Tribune; Catherine Cullen and Jessica Gilhooley, NEIU 19; Sarah Piccini, Lackawanna Historical Society; Ed D'Amico, Anthracite Heritage Museum.

In February 2014, the Everhart Museum will open a new exhibit on the history of D-Day. In coordination with this exhibit, the Everhart Museum and NEIU 19 have teamed up to sponsor a ten-day artist-in-residence program to develop a community exhibit to be hung in the museum's Gallery One. The Lackawanna Historical Society is one of five organizations participating in the program with artist Liz Parry-Faist leading the group to create public works of art that reflect the region and its people during World War II. Several collages have been created using photocopies of items from the collections of the participating sites. Items from the LHS collection include military uniforms, ration books and coupons, period clothing and hats, and letters and diary entries.

The project will conclude with a community day at the Anthracite Heritage Museum on November 23rd when the public will be invited to help finish the collage by adding color and texture.

came when he pitched three scoreless innings against the Philadelphia Athletics in an exhibition game in Williamsport arranged by family friend Tommy Richardson, the president of the Eastern League.

It was Richardson who saved the Eastern League franchises in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre in 1953, after both lost their Major League affiliations following the 1951 season. Having lost \$35,000 in the 1951 season, the Cleveland Indians moved their Wilkes-Barre franchise to Reading, leaving Wilkes-Barre without a team in '52 for the first time since World War I.

Meanwhile, the Red Sox abandoned Scranton for Albany. Enter Lou Baselice, a New York businessman, who bought the Scranton franchise from the Red Sox and signed a deal with the St. Louis Browns.

The '52 Scranton team finished below .500, and without a natural rival in Wilkes-Barre drew only 64,221 down from a high of 165,215 in 1948. As an absentee owner, Baselice and the Browns took a lot of heat from the Scranton press. When Baselice visited Scranton for a day in July he decimated the local connection in the front office, demoting GM Frank Silva to public relations and ordering Emil Gall to the front office of a North Carolina team Baselice owned. Gall resigned.

Writing in *The Scranton Times*, Chick Feldmen speculated Baselice punished Silva and Gall for "unfavorable references to the Browns." Baselice said, "The Browns are doing the best they can to help us. They have acted in good faith."

Baselice, who invested \$112,500 in the Scranton franchise, declined to operate the team in '52 because of "uncalled-for attacks on my character in the Scranton press" and the Browns moved the team to Wichita. Baselice offered the franchise, including equipment and park rental for one year, to any Scranton syndicate for \$7,500.

Tommy Richardson didn't want the EL to operate with only six teams for first time since 1923. He believed the EL needed Scranton and Wilkes-Barre and the cities needed each

other as well. An opening for Wilkes-Barre popped up when the Boston Braves, who were moving to Milwaukee, pulled out of Hartford, Connecticut. Richardson and Harry Rudolph organized the "10,000 Booster Club" in Wilkes-Barre, in which a fan paying \$1 got a membership card to admit him to any regular season game except opening day. Fans bought 11,000 cards the first night. With that money and help from local businesses, Rudolph bought the Hartford franchise. The Stegmaier brewery paid a year's rent for the ballpark and for a new electric scoreboard. Paint and hardware stores volunteered paint and brushes. A grandstand screen, batting cages and office equipment were donated.

Richardson then went to Scranton with 25,000 booster tickets printed at his own expense and spoke to 300 boosters. He explained the same program he had used in Wilkes-Barre and before he left the podium he had sold 10,000.

So Wilkes-Barre and Scranton had teams for 1953, but no players. Richardson helped Scranton make an agreement with the Senators, but Wilkes-Barre could not lure a major league team and was the only city in the league to operate independently, although Detroit, the White Sox and the Birmingham Barons had offered limited support.

The Wilkes-Barre Barons had an easier time attracting players than Scranton Miners, despite their agreement with Washington. The Miners ran an ad in *The Sporting News* seeking players.

The season opened April 21 with Wilkes-Barre beating Scranton 9-7 in 10 innings after the players were paraded from the Hotel Casey to Scranton/Dunmore Stadium led by the Tech and Central bands. Scranton mayor James Hanlon and Dunmore Burgess Martin Monahan threw out the first balls. The next day the teams played at Wilkes-Barre. Welteroth got his first start, losing 5-1. Attendance was 2,010 in Scranton, but a league-high for home-openers of 5,556 in Wilkes-Barre. After that loss in Wilkes-Barre Welteroth pitched well. On May 23, he beat Williamsport

3-2 in the second game of a doubleheader after the local fans honored their hometown hero with gifts and cash at a ceremony between games. On July 7 the Miners were 35-49 and in 6th place ahead of Wilkes-Barre and Williamsport when Welteroth became the Miners first 10-game winner beating Elmira 6-3.

The rest of the season was an epic slump for both Welteroth and the Miners. Welteroth won only one more game after July 7, then lost 11 consecutive times going for his 12th win. He finished 11-20, the second winningest pitcher on the team after local star Ben Cardoni from Jessup, who was 15-9. Though Welteroth was hit hard at times he also lost games 5-4, 3-2, 2-1 on a two-out, two-run triple in the bottom of the ninth and 1-0 in 13 innings.

In August rainouts forced the Miners to play four double headers in four days, six in eight days and 12 in the month. They were swept in eight of the double headers and were 6-28 for the month.

One of their six wins was a 23-4 battering of the Wilkes-Barre Barons in the second game of a doubleheader, the worst defeat in Barons' history. Sichko was 3-5 with five runs scored.

As the losses mounted, Mayor Hanlon proclaimed August 13-19 Community Baseball Week, but attendance plummeted. On August 17 after a Sunday doubleheader drew only 600, Scranton sportswriter Jimmy Calpin wrote prophetically that minor league baseball was "doomed in Scranton."

Though the Miners '53 attendance of 62,221 was comparable to the 62,256 in '52 and sixth in the league, the number was deceiving as 8,222 - 13 percent of season total and the largest crowd in the league in '53 - attended on "Car Day" on August 18, when the team gave away a new 1953 Ford Sedan, men's and women's suits, dinner for five at the Castle Restaurant, a watch donated by Conway and Gallagher and two tons of coal. The official end came on October 14th when

the Scranton franchise was moved to Allentown.

Despite losing, Welteroth liked playing for Scranton and lived there with his wife and childhood sweetheart Joanne. "We lived south of the ballpark in a row of houses. Our favorite restaurant was Italian. I don't remember the name, but it was half-mile across the river."

He doesn't remember what he was paid in Scranton except to say, "it wasn't enough", and that it was considerably less than the \$5,000 he made with the Senators.

The Miners last season was also Welteroth's last season. He went back to Williamsport and ran his father's sheet metal roofing business. He had three sons and a daughter, all successful. One son, Tom, was killed in a motorcycle accident.

Welteroth believes that players 60 years ago were closer than today and had more fun. "In those days ball clubs were family. I loved playing against Wilkes-Barre. It was a good rivalry. It was fun. If you don't have fun, you might as well get out."

The Wilkes-Barre Barons hung on for one more full season as a Detroit Tiger affiliate and won the EL regular season in 1954. But winning didn't translate into ticket sales. In 1955 the team needed to average 1,200 a game to break even. They were averaging 753 in June and the league threatened to move the team to Johnstown if fans didn't respond to a 17-game homestand. They didn't get the fans and the league made good its threat of moving the team to Johnstown on July 1. Johnstown drew 9,000 for the home opener and more fans in 15 games than the Barons had in 32 games.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jack Smiles is a retired newspaper writer and freelancer from Wyoming, PA. He is the author of three biographies of coal miners tuned baseball Hall of Famers who grew up within a five-mile radius of Wyoming. The bios of Hughie Jennings, Ed Walsh and Bucky Harris were published by McFarland. He frequently writes about minor league history for newspapers in Pennsylvania. He and his wife Diane have been married 32 years and have one daughter, Sadie, a film studies grad student at UT, Austin. Jack is a member of the Connie Mack SABR chapter and a senior softball player.