



COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pike County Historical Society
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FAREWELL TO ONE OF PIKE COUNTY'S MOST COLORFUL CHARACTERS

The recent passing of Ann Clark Fields brought many memories to mind, most of them unsavory, unfortunately, but in recent years the tiger seemed to have tamed herself a bit. She somehow, over the years, found her way into my heart.

Many folks might remember her riding about Milford on her “buggy” as she called it, a mobility scooter with an orange warning flag atop it. Some of you might also recall an incident in which her smoking a cigarette with an oxygen tank in her room caused a major fire and explosion in the Borough, destroying the building entirely. As I said, she was indeed colorful.

My first dealing with Ann came in the form of several harassing phone calls when I first began my career at the Columns Museum many years ago. Although my name is Lori, she insisted, and persisted, in calling me “Laura” for at least the first year I knew her. She often called to tell me what to do, who in town to trust, or not, and to ask about items her family had donated to the museum over the years. A specific “punch bowl” was the main attraction in her queries; she once even accused our very own Barbara J. Buchanan of taking it and using it to entertain at her home. (A silly notion!) I came to relish the phone calls, as they were often quite amusing. Here was this lady who terrorized the town in her own way. This brilliant woman, talented writer, history buff, funny, razor-tongued devil, who I couldn’t help but end up liking. She smoked, and drank. Once attending the Historical Society’s Annual Banquet, she rasped at me “what’s the difference if I smoke here [at the table] or at the bar?” which was about 20 feet away. She defiantly put her cigarette out in her mashed potatoes.

These stories are all part of her latter day persona, which made her the character she was. Her upbringing was one of finery. She was well schooled and smart as a whip. Her obituary mentioned she had been married a few times. She was. During her marriage to John J. Fields III, Ann single-handedly organized one of the year’s (1973) largest and most fruitful charitable drives in the history of Pike County, all done in an effort to send aid in the form of both food and clothing to the flood ravaged hollows of Buffalo Creek Valley in West Virginia. The tragedy in West Virginia was caused by a huge



pile of waste material from the Buffalo Mining Company, which gave way on a mountainside causing a wall of water to cascade down destroying 14 mining communities. Ann’s efforts were amazing and her organizational skills stellar in sending much needed aid to the some 5,000 displaced people in record time.

It would seem charitable activities ran in the family, as her mother managed the Salvation Army booth at Grand Central Station in New York City for two years during the First World War. Ann’s mother was also one of the founding members of the Milford Garden Club.

Ann was also a member of many charitable organizations and was featured as one of Pike County’s Most Influential Women in the Winter 2003 issue of Milford Magazine. The Pike County Historical Society was the recipient of

many items belonging to the Ann and her husband after their beautiful home along Route 209, overlooking the Delaware River was taken down due to the National Park Service’s Tock’s Island Project.

Ann wrote a series of articles for the Pike County Dispatch for several years under the pen name Abbey Cameron. Her memories, musings and factual information are part of several subject files in the Society’s archives. Although Ann is gone, her memory will live on through her writings and historical snippets for all to share, and available for reading within the walls of one of her favorite Pike County haunts...The Columns Museum.

By Lori Strelecki

Mr. & Mrs. A.C. Clark at their home, Coldstream, at 502 Raymondskill Road, where Ann grew up. The girl in the photo is most likely Ann



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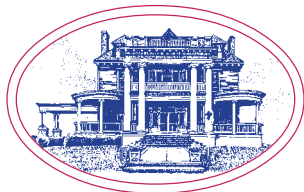
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the newsletter of the
Pike County Historical Society
is published three times yearly and is
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Members and other interested parties are
invited to submit editorial content
for consideration.

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Museum Hours:
1 pm to 4 pm Wednesday, Saturday
& Sunday or by appointment

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

Before named streets with numbered houses came into existence, and when few persons could read, painted and carved signboards were used by men of all trades. Often signs were incongruous and non-signifying as to the relation of the business they indentified. In an article written in 1710 a man advocating censorship of sign boards wrote:

“Our streets are filled with blue boars, black swans, and red lions; not to mention flying pigs, and hogs in armor, with many other creatures more extraordinary than any in the deserts of Africa. My first task therefore should be like that of Hercules, to clear the city from monsters. In the second place I would forbid that creatures of jarring and incongruous natures should be joined together in the same sign; such as the bell and the neat’s tongue; the dog and the gridiron. The fox and goose may be supposed to have met, but what have the fox and seven stars to do together? And when did the lamb and dolphin ever meet, except upon a signpost? As for the cat and fiddle there is a conceit in it, and therefore I do not intend that anything I have said should affect it.”

Many of the apparently meaningless names on tavern signs come through the familiar corruption of generations of use, through alterations both by dialect of speakers and by the successive mistakes of ignorant sign-painters.

Here are some examples of miscommunication:

A sign that was supposed to read “The Bacchanalians” somehow became “The Bag o’ Nails.” “The Catherine Wheel” became the familiar “Cat and Wheel.” “The Goat and Compass” was derived from the motto “God Encompasseth Us.” “The Pig and Carrot” was to be “Pique et Carreau” which really was confusing because neither a pig or a carrot appeared on the sign. *Pique et carreau* is the spade and the diamond in playing cards.

As more people learned to read, business men began getting clever. Here are some examples of early catch phrases, slogans and , dare I say it? Jingles:

“Here in this hive we’re all alive, Good liquor makes us funny.
If you are dry, step in and try The flavor of our honey.”

There’s a bit of dark humor in this ditty:

“This is the tree that never grew, this is the bird that never flew,
this is the ship that never sailed, this is
the mug that never failed.”

One of the most famous and copied signs of the time was known as “A Man Loaded with Mischief.” It was originally painted on a signboard in England. It depicts a man with a lock and chain around his neck which symbolize wedlock, there’s a monkey, as well as a woman, on his back. Talk about symbolism!

It was signboards such as these that popularized the thought of serious artists taking on work for local shopkeepers when times were hard.



A Man Loaded with Mischief.

A LETTER FROM LORI MUSEUM DIRECTOR - PIKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As the year 2010 nears its end, I come to the drastic realization that I have been working for the PCHS ten full years. Wow, who'd have thought? In my time in Pike I have learned many things. Things not only about the history of this county of ours, but about the people in our community, local politics, the evils of grant writing and closeout reports, diversity, and the rigors of maintaining a beautiful 22- room manse which contains the all-important bits and pieces which make up Pike County's history in physical form.

The Society and Museum are doing well. Despite state budget cuts and a plethora of other non-profits vying for our gracious community's residents' dollars, we keep on keeping on, quietly and efficiently providing the public and our members with education and information about Pike County and its inhabitants. I often walk past the Columns Museum and can't help but stop to admire the stately home. I also look upon it with much pride. Almost each time I enter the building I say "Hello Columns." The house and I have become good friends and I have spent ten years learning of its intricacies. For example; the furnace likes to be reset or restarted every two weeks or so in the dead of winter. The downstairs toilet handle enjoys a "three jiggle" in order to stop running. And just when you think all the batteries are charged and the smoke detectors and motion detectors are good, one will start chirping—all the way up on the third floor, like a cricket just begging to be looked for and squished. (Or, in Board Member Christine Cohen's version of this scenario, found and released into the wild.)

When I was a kid in Catholic Grammar School learning how to diagram a sentence and a good lesson in humility by either Sister Clarissima, Cherubim, or Laurentia, my friends and I used to do this thing on the playground where about six of us would link our arms together in a line and plow through the rest of the kids that got in our way sing-songing "we don't stop for nothing," over and over, and in unison. I must say that the aforementioned triumvirate of nuns put a stop to this practice after Sandy Marshall was clotheslined and fell to the ground. They also told us that the correct mantra would be "we don't stop for anything". However, I can't help



but assimilate that mentality and unity to myself and my wonderful Board of Directors when it comes to the Historical Society. We have faced many struggles over the years in our efforts to keep the Columns in good repair, as it seems the minute we solve one issue regarding the maintenance of our home, another arises leaving us scratching our heads and linking our arms in an effort to solve the latest preservation fiasco.

Presently we are seeking funds for a new mansard roof and some much needed renovation to our Foundation Room. We have already experienced varied leaks and seepage which we have taken care of. A snowy winter will cause me to have to move into the attic of the Museum, or onto the roof itself, snow shovel in hand, in order to keep an eye out for new leaks or troublesome areas. Rainy days presently cause me to lose much needed beauty sleep as visions of leaks and damage to our valued artifacts cause tortured tossing and turning. However, "we don't stop for nothing" er, I mean "anything," and we will find our way through this latest financial challenge somehow, because that is what we do. Contributions from our friends in history and our membership are vital. Thank you all for your continued support.

With every good wish
Lori

Happy Holidays!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome Winter! In 2010 the P.C.H.S. filled our society with music and art programs. We also installed a new, permanent exhibit which honors the Marines, Soldiers of the Sea.

We look to the New Year with much enthusiasm, as 2011 will be the year in which our most cherished artifact, the Lincoln Flag, makes its way home to its place of origin, Washington DC.

Our focus remains on you, our members, and we will continue to provide programs and exhibits that provide culture, history and education to our community.

You, our members, are the lifeblood of the Society and you have shown us during the past year that you are there stronger than ever with your support; and for that I offer a sincere "thank you."

Ray Weeks
President PCHS

FACEBOOK FRIENDS



Look for the Columns Museum on Facebook

If you are a regular on Facebook, please go to Pike County Historical Society and “like” us, then “suggest us” to all of your friends. Check on our page to share your thoughts on Pike’s History, ask us questions and get up-to-date information on events and news regarding The Columns Museum.

GENEALOGICAL NEWS

A grassroots organization called **PaHR-Access** (People for Better Pennsylvania Historical Records Access) is campaigning to have the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania make its State death certificates that are at least 50 years old become open records and to do what a number of other states have already done and have them available online. You can learn more about this effort at: users.rcn.com/timarg/PaHR-Access.htm (or Google PaHR-Access). Having considerably greater access to these records would make doing genealogical research in Pennsylvania vastly easier.



A great and generous way to remember the Pike County Historical Society is in your wills. A typical estate is valued at \$200,000. A bequest of only 3% would amount to \$6,000 for the Historical Society and would be a wonderful remembrance to us.

Estate bequests will be memorialized, and donations are tax deductible, a further benefit to your heirs.

TRIBUTE TO THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

New Permanent Exhibit Pays Tribute to the Marines

The Columns is proud to have added a new exhibit, put together by Jack Ritter and Henry Czech, both retired marines of the Gung Ho 909 Detachment. The exhibit will take up permanent residence on the second floor of the Museum.

While the Columns boasts many military related artifacts dating back to the Civil War, there is not one branch of the military that has previously been showcased. The exhibit features quite a range of artifacts and memorabilia, including Medals of Honor, uniforms, medical equipment and weapons.

The exhibit officially opened on November 20th with much well deserved fanfare. Two of Pike County’s current Commissioners served in the Marine Corps; both couldn’t be more pleased with the finished exhibit. It is also of note that friends of our deceased Past President Michael Billig made a donation in memoriam to assist in the funding of the project and the room is dedicated to Mr. Billig’s memory.

A military man himself, Michael was a Korean War Army Veteran. He continued his dedication to the military as a tour guide at West Point. The Columns is proud to remember Michael in such an appropriate way, and we thank the Rand, Weinberg, Silverman and Cooper Families for their generosity in remembrance of their friend. Special thanks to Henry Czech and Jack Ritter for their time and dedication in putting this wonderful exhibit together.

USMC Permanent Display at the Columns



LINCOLN FLAG NEWS

FORD'S THEATER AND THE LINCOLN COTTAGE

Going Home and Visiting Friends

Our prized Lincoln Flag has been the topic of much conversation recently and plans are unfolding which are very exciting. A small piece of the flag, a bit more than a thread really, was found disconnected from the rest of the flag and lying on the bottom of its grand display case. The topic of preservation came up and we re-addressed the manner in which our treasured flag was stabilized several years ago. The Textile Preservation Institute assured us that there is no reason to worry. We contacted the *New York Says Thank You Foundation* and we are proud to tell you all that this small part of our Lincoln Flag will be incorporated into the National 9/11 Flag, which is currently touring the United States for several meaningful “stitching ceremonies” using historic, retired flags from all across the Nation. Please go to www.National911Flag.org for more information on this effort.

In more exciting Flag news...look for the Lincoln Flag to take a little trip back to Washington, DC, its place of origin, in April of 2011. Sites such as the Armed Forces Retirement Home and Lincoln's Cottage have confirmed their interest. We are still in negotiations with Ford's Theater, but we do hope to bring the blood stained flag back to the Presidential Box, if only for a day. This “tour” of Washington, DC will take place over a two week span.

Anyone willing to sponsor the Lincoln Flag's Journey Home can contact Lori, Museum Director, at 570-296-8126. Sponsors will be listed at all sites and mentioned in the official program. Sponsorships start at \$500. If you wish to be a part of this memorable trip, let us know and we will try and organize a special package deal, depending on our numbers.



The Presidential Box at Ford's Theater



The Lincoln Cottage, future stop for the Lincoln Flag is located on a picturesque hilltop in Washington, DC. President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldier's Home is the most significant site directly associated with Lincoln's Presidency aside from the White House. Abraham Lincoln and his family lived there for a quarter of his presidency—from June to November of 1862, '63 and '64. It was during his first season there that Lincoln drafted the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. It was opened for the first time in 2008. Tours of the Cottage offer an in-depth look at Lincoln, the man and the President. The Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center, adjacent to the Cottage, features galleries exploring Life in Civil War Washington, The Soldiers' Home, Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief, and a rotating exhibitions gallery.



The Washington campus of the **Armed Forces Retirement Home** is situated with majestic views, rolling hills, tranquil lakes and historic landmarks. Nestled on 272 acres in the heart of our nation's capital, just minutes from the White House, U.S. Capitol and other national landmarks, the Home once housed four U.S. Presidents, including Abraham Lincoln. Considered a city within a city, the campus features everything residents need for daily living: 1021

private rooms for independent living equipped for cable television and telephones, banks, chapels, convenience store, post office, laundry, barber shop and beauty salon, dining room, and 24-hour security and staff presence, as well as outstanding social, recreational and occupational activities for every interest. Within the compound is also found the **Lincoln Cottage**.

Left: Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, D.C.

Right: The Lincoln Cottage



WHEN LACKAWAXEN WAS AN ADAMLESS EDEN

In 1925 the Philadelphia Sun published an article that told the tale of the town of Lackawaxen. At the time, what attracted the press to the riverside town was the fact that it was run by women. Not politically, as there were no formal offices held; such as Mayor or Burgess, but certainly professionally. It would seem this oddity occurred due to the luck of the draw, so to speak. These women were widowed or the wives or daughters of the men who chose to work the railroad rather than set up shop at home. The Postmaster was Louise Cortright, a German born woman who declared her loyalty to the U.S. during WWI by outdoing all competitors with similar demographics in the sale of Liberty Bonds. Her "mailman" was a 19 year old girl, and the assistant Postmaster was also a woman. The list goes on. "Milkman": Anna Bankers. Taxi Driver: Helen Gregory. Helen Gregory's mother, Anna Gregory, ran a very modern department store and also built a movie theater, which served as a place for town gatherings as well. Mrs. Gregory powered these places by use of her own electric plant. I guess this made her one of the most "powerful" women in Lackawaxen. Need some lamb chops? Adeline Kuhn was the local butcher, working off her block in the town meat market. Jane Campbell, another Lackawaxen resident of the female persuasion, was found at the time the Sun's article was being written, atop a ladder, hanging paper in the parlor of a 200 room summer hotel. She was 59 years old at the time. She papered the entire



Delaware House and was the most sought after person in the trade for her time, having even ventured as far as New York City to earn her \$6 a day. (Her story could only be better if she had only one arm.) The general store and tavern were also run by women. Let's hear it for the ladies! Well done. (The only business in 1925 Lackawaxen that was not run by a woman was the town garage.)

SICILIANS ON ICE

The great ice gorge that amassed in the Delaware River in March of 1904 caused much flood damage. It would break loose, only to pile up again, and break loose again. It piled up below the confluence of the Neversink and Delaware causing water to back up and flood the villages of Port Jervis and Matamoras. The water was two feet deep on Pike and Front Streets, and portions of the Erie railroad were at risk. The whistle sounded as the tracks washed away and all men involved with the railroad, and Salvation Army Volunteers were called to duty. When the ice began to pile up against the I-bars of the railroad bridge with tremendous force, the steel began to vibrate and boom. The ice formed across the bridge from one bank to the other, where it momentarily stopped again. It only took 60 seconds for the force of the current to move the gorge again; taking the railroad bridge with it. The span toppled down amid a great cracking and snapping, until the prolonged crash ended, sending the span into the icy waters. The bridge took an awkward turn and then disappeared beneath the ice.

This day of disaster was recalled by George Stark in 1967. He was all of 21 years old when the ice gorge continued its path of destruction down the Delaware River. He helped rescue several elderly people, even carrying people to safety from their rapidly flooding homes, on his back. When word came that five miles of Erie track were washed out, he headed to the site of the washout. Upon arrival he was told that 500 Sicilian laborers were on their way from Hoboken to repair the track. Stark was assigned by the Salvation Army to stay and feed the workmen. Finding it impossible to make 500 sandwiches twice a day, Stark took to simply cutting a round loaf of bread in half and stuffed each side with meat. Stark recalled the men enjoyed their sandwiches quite heart-



Ice flooding along the Delaware in Milford in 1902

ily. Although the Sicilians were excellent workers and very generous, Stark mentioned they were also a bit hot tempered. One day a fight broke out which resulted in a fatal stabbing. This caused many local workers to have pause, some even fleeing. The ones that remained worked with the Sicilian gents until the project was completed. "Grazia."

Bridges "Under" Troubled Water: March 1875: On St. Patrick's Day the Matamoras-Port Jervis Bridge was carried away in an ice jam. February 1888: Blizzard causes flooding and ice in river takes out Milford-Montague Bridge. October 1903: Floods take out a smaller bridge in Port Jervis. February 1888: Blizzard causes flooding and ice in river takes out Milford-Montague Bridge.

MUSKRAT LOVE AND THE ORIGIN OF HOME SCHOOLING

The Van Etten family is one of note in Pike County's history. They acquired much land on both sides of the Delaware. In 1745 Jacobus Van Etten built his house on a tract of land where the Conashaugh Creek introduces itself to the Delaware River.

The tension between the white man and the local Indians was quite palpable back then due to bad feelings over the recent Walking Purchase Treaty in which the Lenai Lenape tribes were essentially "cheated" out of a significant amount of land through cunning and deceit. Google "walking purchase" for full details.

Jacobus was a renowned Indian fighter and was in charge of a local militia during the French and Indian War. At the Battle of Conashaugh in 1780 he and his three sons and a son in-law were included in the militia he commanded. This experience gained him military honors, as he went on to become Captain of the 5th battalion North Hampton Militia. He then went on to serve under General "Mad" Anthony Wayne and in the battle of Brandywine. I guess he differs from Tom Quick Jr. because he killed Indians professionally.

By the 1800's all kinds of Van Ettens made their way to Pike County, formerly North Hampton, and built on the tract purchased by Jacobus. They were all quite successful in their pursuits, no matter what they might have been.

Robert and Solomon Van Etten built a seven room home that mostly catered to raftsmen. This was as early as 1837. Robert later built a 25 room guest house called the Conashaugh Spring House. John and James Van Etten continued the family business and expanded to accommodate 175 guests and became an elite resort by 1884. There must have been a bunch of little Van Ettens running around because they felt the need to build their own one-room schoolhouse on the property. The teacher must have been a gem, because the Van Ettens established a post office, built the first telephone lines in Pike, eventually the Van Pike Telephone Company had the county wired (1932). It is said that the electricity to run the phone lines was generated by water power run from a faucet and saved in a battery. Not a bunch of calls were made, as not many people had telephone connections. The company was profitably sold though, and became the Tri-States Telephone Company. There was no texting.

It seems the Van Ettens had the "Midas Touch" in all their pur-



Conashaugh Spring House

suits. Even Uncle Sam Van Etten, was known as the most successful muskrat trapper in the county. Muskrats have sometimes been a food resource for humans. Muskrat meat is said to taste like rabbit or duck. In the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit there is a longstanding dispensation allowing Catholics to consume muskrat on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent (when the eating of meat, except for fish, is prohibited). Because the muskrat lives in water, it is considered equivalent to fish. Lenten dinners of muskrat are therefore traditional in parts of Michigan. The meat is occasionally consumed in Belgium and The Netherlands and is traditional dish on the Delmarva Peninsula and in certain other areas and population segments of the United States.

In 1880 Uncle Sam Van Etten caught 104 muskrats in box traps, assuring his place in local history. What a taste treat for his guests at his raftsmen Inn! Yummy!



Muskrat (*ondatra zibethicus*)



Yes, I'd like to become a member of the Pike County Historical Society and join in the preservation and enjoyment of our historic legacy. Please send my membership card and newsletter to:

Name _____
 Mailing Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

★ All memberships are for one individual or business and are renewable annually ★

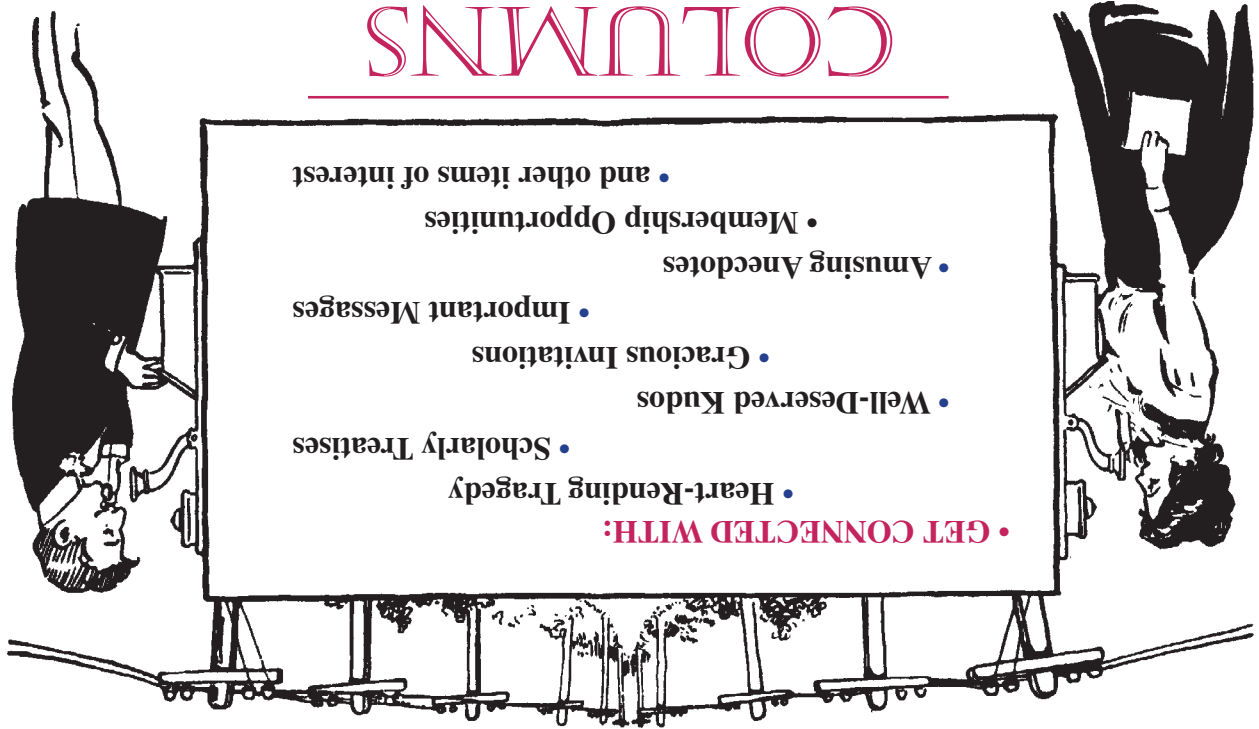
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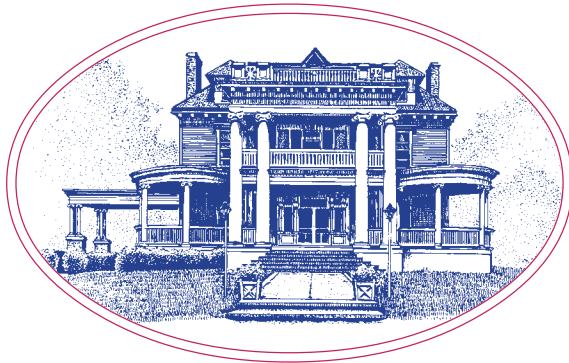
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