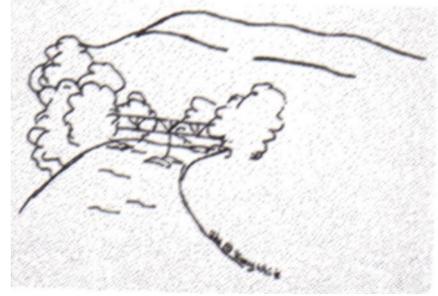


Strasburg Heritage Association



Volume 14

Fall 2014

Issue 3

Strasburg, Virginia

NEWSLETTER

strasburgvaheritage.org

SHA Program

Christmas Traditions Through The Decades

Sunday, Dec. 7, 2-4pm

St. Paul Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall

193 W. Washington St. Strasburg

Join us to enjoy Strasburg Seniors as they reminisce and tell stories about Christmas traditions they remember through the decades, from the 1930s to the present. We all have fond memories of days gone by and our panelists will share some of their stories. Our panel will include Ginger Aliotti, Carroll Estep, Sally Hupp, Eva Mae Pifer, Dick Smoot, Ralph Stickley and Bill Walton. The audience will be encouraged to participate!

We also invite you to bring your favorite Christmas treat recipe (not food, just the written recipe) to share. We'll provide paper and pencil for folks to copy. And you're invited to bring old Christmas cards and Christmas postcards for display. Come share holiday memories with us!

Free, public invited. Join us for fellowship and refreshments

President's Letter

Barbara Adamson , SHA President

President's Letter

I begin by thanking those who helped make the 150 Years Ago...On This Day Battlefield Tour, The Battle of Fisher's Hill such a success. The weather was perfect and a large and appreciative crowd of about 150 people followed historian Richard Kleese up Ramseur's Hill as he set the scene and shared his vast knowledge of the action that day. Attendees included many local folks and a number of people from far and wide who had been following Sesquicentennial programs in the Valley. Our day was topped off with a visit to the historic Barb house west on Battlefield Rd which served as a hospital after the battle. We thank Tom and Ann Foster for the generous invitation to visit their home and know that our out of town guests especially enjoyed this unique opportunity. The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, owners of the Fisher's Hill Battlefield site, have added new trails and informational signs. I encourage you to visit the Battlefield and see these excellent improvements.

SHA will host the local Community Meal at St. Paul Lutheran Church on Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2015 at 5:30. All are invited to attend this free will offering dinner.

After many years of conducting a semi-annual litter pick-up on the Valley Pike south of Strasburg, our small group has bowed out of the Adopt-A-Highway program. We decided that we've done our part and hope that another organization will assume responsibility for that section of highway, since it's an important and very attractive entranceway to our town.

Artz Hardware A Little Folk History

By
Kathy Kehoe

*"Mr. Artz, did you sell "board stretchers" at Artz's Hardware?"
Somebody told me they used to come into Artz's Hardware and ask for
a board stretcher."*

Mr. Artz: (kindly) "Somebody was pulling your leg."

And so they were. Sammy Artz had a good laugh out of that. He didn't sell "post hole seeds" either in all the sixty years he owned and operated Artz Hardware in Strasburg. But people asked for them all the same. Instead of buying posts for your fence, couldn't you just dig the post hole, drop in a seed and your post would grow? Daughter Barbara Artz Paquin recalls: "Those boys always had somethin' goin' on - my cousin Johnny Rufner was quite the kidder!" Merille Long remembers these requests as regular jokes around the hardware store. "Artz's had things like loose seeds that you bought by the ounce. We went there for banana melon seed. No other place had it. You went there to get a new window pane, a plug-in outlet that screwed into a light socket and if you asked for something like a board stretcher....Sam, John or Ed would go along with the joke!"

Merille adds, "The Artz's are my cousins. I remember Artz's as the last of the places around that you would go when you needed to find the little hard to find things that most of the new hardware stores didn't have in stock or sometimes never heard of. There was also a true family atmosphere in there. I remember being used to calling Sam Jr. Frankie and having to start calling him Sam and both of them, Sr. and Jr. both answering me at the same time. They went the extra mile to help you find whatever you needed."

Samuel "Sammy" Artz Sr. graduated from Strasburg High School in 1944 and went off to the University of Richmond with a full scholarship and hopes of becoming a doctor. But he says with a smile, "I was in love" with a Strasburg girl named Juanita and soon returned home to marry. The hardware store was started by Jim Lashley and bought in 1941 by Raymon Tamkin who operated under the name of Tamkin Hardware. When Sammy Artz returned to Strasburg, he took a job with Mr. Tamkin and in 1956 Mr. Tamkin retired. Sammy rented the building and operated under the name Artz Hardware. When he called Mr. Tamkin to tell him the building needed a new roof, Mr. Tamkin said he wasn't going to put a new roof on that building. But, he said, he would sell it to Sammy, who responded that he could not afford to buy it. Mr. Tamkin already had a plan and he told Sammy that his next rent check would "go to the principal" and he would deed the building to him.

Artz Hardware was a family business that sold everything from canning jars, paint, wallpaper, sporting goods, gardening tools and seeds, housewares, guns and ammunition and fishing tackle. Customers could spend time looking through wallpaper and paint samples. It was also a UPS location and they sold fishing and hunting licenses and sold tractors and lawn mowers. At Christmas time, they sold live Christmas trees. I remember the rows of kitchen wares, baking and cooking pans, electric mixers, and lots of shiny metal. Then there was the wonderful scent that hardware stores always had that I can't describe. Katy Kehoe Soderholm remembers "They had Spice Girls lollypops and I would go and get one every Wednesday before Koo-Koo News at the Library. And I remember really liking the smell. I still love the smell of hardware stores."

The Koo Koo News, a children's newspaper that headquartered next door at the Strasburg Community Library, interviewed "neighbor and longtime citizen of Strasburg Sam Artz...for an article entitled: The History of Strasburg and Wishes for Its Future". Koo Koo reporters Katy Bennett, Bridget Kehoe, Jessica Racey, Jamie Matthews and Laura Drummonds wrote that Sammy "had noticed all the major new things like roads, bridges, and our new town hall. When we asked him what he wanted to see in the future, he replied that he liked Strasburg the way it is and does not want to see a lot of changes." When I read this to Sammy, he agreed that was true.

Townpeople still remember the store: "I bought one of the best cake pans I have ever owned at Artz Hardware. It is a metal pan with a metal lid and I still use it, almost 20 years later." said Linda Holsinger Lambert. Jackie Boyer Pomeroy said "It always had everything and anything you needed." Sharon Bly Ferguson recalls that she "Always went there every spring for onion sets and seeds for planting my garden and I got my first hunting and fishing license there. You could always find something in there that you needed." Marilyn LaManna added that "he always had the rubber gaskets for old style pressure cookers! And also, like Sharon, momma got her onion sets there too!" Brenda Kenney Stensney remembers that "We always went there with my Dad to buy things for the farm." Recalls Sheryl Pangle Pifer, "I used to go in there with my Grandmother and I always thought the bins of nails were the coolest things!"

It was evident that Sammy had a good sense of humor, and loved to nickname his customers. Sherry Vance Baughman says "I loved going in there looking around and talking to Mr. Artz, he

was so nice and funny." Margaret Yentzer said, "He always called me Mrs. Ron, (her husband's name), even when I saw him last year....". Karen Shell Rinker remembers "He always called me Shelly and last time I saw him he still called me Shelly. Just loved that store and just loved The Artz,s!!!!!" Donnie Lutz said, "I remember when I lived on Fort street I would go to Artz Hardware a lot. Mr. Artz gave me a nickname (Squeaky) don't know why but that was what he called me."

From Belinda Pappas Palmer, Sammy's niece: Diane (Sammy's daughter) and I used to ride bikes from her house "uptown" to "the store", but I don't remember what we did when we got there. Years later, when I was beginning to grow most of my family's food, Uncle Sammy would let me pick out just a few seeds from the bulk bins and not charge me. I always bought all my canning supplies there, and knew if I needed just one nail of a particular size, Uncle Eddie or Uncle Sammy would find it for me, and throw in a couple more. My cousin, John Ruffner, Sr., worked there, as well, and of course Aunt Neats (Mrs. Artz) did her share. It was a family concern!"

John Phillip Painter was known for his weird science experiments and he reflects that, "It now occurs to me that it must have been quite obvious to dear old Sam Artz that I was up to something when I would descend upon him with a list of the oddest items. Though most were quite innocent like Science Fair Projects etc...there have been some creations attributed to me that I must deny. I should have left behind a tape recorder to catch the speculations on some of my purchases." Laughs John. "But one thing I can say.... If Artz didn't have what I needed... nobody would!"

I remember when I was a teenager I picked out orange paint to paint my room and Sammy asked me, "Are you sure you want THIS color?" I did, I assured him, it was 1972 and orange and yellow were popular.

Artz Hardware was open Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. Mrs. Artz kept books and worked in the store after their children were all attending school and son Sam Artz Jr. worked in the store alongside his father. They would put "floor oil" on the pine floors every Saturday evening. The Lime Kiln companies had an account there for tools and shovels and other equipment, and would pay monthly. I remember my grandfather Leo Cameron buying his lawn movers, hammers, and garden seeds and tools on credit and my uncle who handled his money, paid Artz's monthly. Leo visited with Sammy every day and would get coffee from the Virginia Restaurant for Sammy and whoever else was working. Sammy remembers how Leo would tease him by sitting in his desk chair and putting his feet on his desk, another example of Sammy's kindness and his sense of humor.

Artz Hardware was a well-loved landmark in our small town, where the Artz's knew their customers by name, (or by their nicknames). Many town residents can still look around their homes, or look at old pictures, or the home canned jars that lined their cellar shelves, or the tools stored in their outdoor sheds, and recall how Artz Hardware influenced their remodeling projects and their flower beds. We remember what we bought there, how it felt, how it smelled, how it looked, but most of all, how the warmth of a family business touched our lives.

The Artz's closed the store in 2005, when Sammy retired, leaving behind 60 years of memories. The store was rented to two different businesses that moved to other locations, and then the building was sold to Janet and Ron Heishman. They opened Pot Town Organics in October and Mr. Sam Artz cut the ribbon on opening day.

A Little Folk History A Few Fond Memories

by
Diane Artz Furlong

I remember the day Daddy came home from the hardware store for lunch and told Mother that the store belonged to him now. He said that Mr. Tamkin told him he could take the roof off if he wanted to. I could tell Mother was pleased and proud and Daddy was smiling a lot. I was 7 years old.

I remember summer days when I'd ride my bicycle barefoot the 3 blocks from our home to the back entrance of the store. I'd run inside on my shoeless feet and deliver whatever message or retrieve whatever doodad I'd come for. I would endure the guffawing and teasing from Daddy ("Diane, you're wild as the west Texas wind!") and whoever else was hanging around the counter with him and ride back home on my bicycle. I would then endure the scolding I got from Mother for getting my bare feet blackened by the old oiled wood floor then tracking the black dirt into the house.

I always had a nice jump rope because Daddy would cut me one from the big spool of rope he sold by the foot, carefully wrapping the ends with tape to make handles for me to hold. I could never resist touching things and I delighted in plunging my arms up to the elbows in the old seed bins filled with pink and yellow corn, pale green pea, and white lima bean seeds. I'd get a good feel in before someone would yell at me to get my "hands out of the seed bins!"

I remember slamming the big green screen door, running up and down the concrete ramp in back, fiddling with the weights on the old grain scale, and riding the rolling ladder up and down the aisle.

The timing of our days centered around Daddy's comings and goings between home and the hardware store. As I got older I calmed down some and actually became a bit shy about going into the store, never knowing who might be there as well. Someone was always teasing.

There came a time when the hardware store was not so interesting to me anymore. I imagine Daddy was less interested by then too but he persevered and made the business his lifelong career. My happy days of childhood corresponded to Daddy's time of being "Sam, Sam, the Hardware Man." I can't imagine having any other childhood.

Note: Diane Artz Furlong is a daughter of Sam and Juanita Artz.

**A Little Folk History
A Daughter's Memory**
By
Barbara Artz Pacquin

When we were growing up, Artz Hardware is where our daddy went to work every day. Each evening when he came home, we all sat down to dinner together. Sometimes during our meal, the telephone would ring and Daddy would have to go back to "the store" for a customer who needed something. This occurred on Sundays, too. The phone would ring and off Daddy would go. The business closed at 5 PM, but it was open later if someone called who was in need. Carpenters, painters, plumbers, yes, but also anyone else who required some emergency item that couldn't wait until Artz Hardware opened again at 7 AM. Growing up, I understood from this that my father was a very good and caring man, and that working at (and later owning) the hardware store was his way of giving service to his community and its citizens each and every day.

I remember using pencils and pens in school that held the words "Artz Hardware" and the motto "Our Greatest Asset: Your Good Will."

I knew that he was well-respected on "main street" and I was very proud to be his daughter. My father was extremely generous and kind to others; he dealt with people in a respectful and friendly manner, always adding his special sense of humor. What better man for me to emulate? Thank you, Daddy.

**SHA Board of
Directors
2014**

Barbara Adamson

President

Judy Troxell

Vice-President

Sue Foster

Treasurer

Wendy Pieper

Secretary

Kathy Kehoe

Newsletter Editor

Bill Foster

Dennis Hupp

Dee Keister

Marie Spence

Tim Taylor

Laura Ellen Wade

Joan Williams

Linda Williams

Polly Wilson

Folk History in the Making
Pot Town Organics
By
Kathy Kehoe

Janet Heishman opened Pot Town Organics in October in the old Artz Hardware building. Sam Artz Sr., who owned and operated Artz Hardware for sixty years until he retired in 2005, cut the ribbon on opening day. Advertised as "A Gardener's Supply Store" Pot Town Organics showcases a variety of goods for the organic gardener and those concerned about the environment. They are open Monday through Saturday 9-6pm. The first thing you see when you enter the store is a community bulletin board. Janet's passion, besides organics, is supporting local business and getting farmers and consumers together. She carries many local products including organic soap, sage air freshener, organic whole cane sugar, organic pest control, organic potting soil, local honey from Star Tannery, probiotic deodorant, "Boo Boo" salve for dogs, houseplants and seeds, and gardening tools. My favorite is a "hergonomic spade/shovel "made specifically for women". If you stop in at Pot Town Organics, you will marvel at their canning section, reminiscent of what you could buy at Artz's. You'll find water bath canners, and "Ball" brand canning jars. But you will also find special jars from Germany. The "Weck" brand with a lid similar to the glass and rubber ring jars that Mason and Ball used to make. The Weck jars can also be used for kitchen storage jars and decorative Christmas containers. You will find rows of shelves with orange or yellow price tags still pasted onto the shelf, frozen in time from the days when paint cans lined the shelves. The price for a gallon of paint at Artz's was \$34.99. In the plant section, Janet has for sale terrariums and terrarium kits, violets, and cactus. There is also a great display of old butchering tools. The potting soil you buy at Pot Town Organics is, well, organic. And you can find many items made by local craftsmen in Janet's store.

Thrilled to be the new owners of the Artz Hardware building, Janet is eager to share with the community. She hopes to put in solar panels as her next project to cut down heating costs and to reduce her carbon footprint. Janet hails from San Antonio where she met and married Strasburg native Ron Heishman. He left Strasburg to join the Air Force and returned to his roots after his mother was widowed. Growing up in Strasburg, his family owned and operated Shipps Auto Sales.

The traditional hardware store and the new age organic store have many similarities yet are different in their choice of products. Both stores foster community involvement and interaction with customers. Both, in their respective time periods, provide their customers with the tools they need to grow, produce and foster their own food, to farm, to build, to respect their environment, while beautifying their homes, yards and community. It was and is still a place where people gather to talk, to compare and share information, getting tips and advice on creating warm spaces in their homes. Just as Sammy Artz stocked his store with those things his customers needed and asked for, so does the store of 2014. The people in the Strasburg area are still canning, still growing flower and vegetable gardens, still nurturing houseplants. Only we, children of the 1950s, flower children of the 60s and 70s, approach gardening and food preservation in different ways from our parents and grandparents. Customers of today are asking for ways to get rid of garden pests that aren't harmful to the soil or our air or the vegetables we are growing. We have been hoping for a local business we can frequent like we frequented Artz's Hardware, but where we can get the items that are important to us now. The wallpaper we bought at Artz's has long since been changed with new paper or paint. The first ten coats of paint on my Grandparents house came from Artz's Hardware. My Grandfather Cameron's garden was planted from seeds from Artz's Hardware and the tools he used to cultivate it came from Artz's too. Just as our parents and grandparents turned to that building on main street, for advice and information and products that fit their lifestyle and their most important ideals, we continue to turn to that same space, to our local business, to nurture what is most important to us.

As Strasburg native Belinda Palmer put it, "I was impressed with the variety, arrangement, and of course the hospitality of Janet, Ron, Melody, and Jim. For years, I've had to order or go out of town to find many of the products offered, which adds to the overall price, and now they're two miles from my home. I've known Janet for longer than I can remember, and know I can trust her to suggest only products that won't harm the environment, my pets, or me."

Strasburg Heritage Association

PO Box 525

Strasburg, VA 22657

Strasburg Heritage Association

PO Box 525

Strasburg, VA 22657

www.strasburgvaheritage.org

Membership Application & Renewal

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email address:

MEMBERSHIP: Cost is \$20.00

Additional Donation: _____