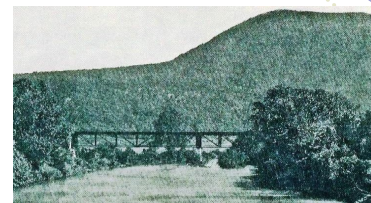


Strasburg Heritage Association



Volume 16

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Issue 1

Strasburg, Virginia

NEWSLETTER

strasburgvaheritage.org

Strasburg & The Post-Civil War Era– 1865 & Beyond

SHA Annual Meeting and Program

Sunday, Feb. 21, 2016, 2-4pm

St. Paul Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, 193 W. Washington St. Strasburg

Join us for a program to be given by popular local author and historian Richard Kleese. Richard will speak about the time after the War when men had returned home, recovery from the devastation of the conflict was underway and Federal Troops were still present in the county. The presentation will follow a brief business meeting.

The public is invited. Join us for fellowship and refreshments.

*****Graveyard Walking Tours*****

2015 was the first year that SHA has organized the popular Halloween themed walking tours in town, following in the footsteps of Hometown Strasburg. Event chairman Tim Taylor created a tour of Strasburg's Riverview Cemetery on Oct. 24 which was enjoyed by over 100 people. We thank our volunteers, Susan Smith, DiaLinn McCarter, Jay Winkfield, Abbey Rinker, John Adamson, Rhonda Taylor, Kloe Sine, Makenzie Williams, Mary Redmon and Ina Rae Crisman, who presented a story at each stop. We appreciated members of the Strasburg High School Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) for accompanying each tour group through the very dark cemetery. Thanks also to Sam Saliba and his staff at the Hotel Strasburg for their generosity in selling tickets, providing light refreshments and allowing us to use space at the Hotel as a starting point for the tour.

2016 Strasburg Heritage Homes Tour – Fabulous!

Many thanks to everyone who helped to make our 2015 homes tour a terrific one. Thanks first of all to our generous homeowners Diane Laferriere and Bert Cole (Four Mile House), Conly and Tina Crabill (Crabill/Rogers House), Strasburg Guards (Dosh House), Jo Bickle and Ginny Hamrick (Richard Farmhouse), Mike and Kendra Smith (Smith House) and Ricci and Erica Troxell (Strasburg Nash) for allowing almost 300 people to visit their homes during the holiday season!

Of course, we couldn't hold such an event without our gracious volunteers who help out at each location. Our partnership with the Massanutten Garden Club, whose members create lovely decorations and assist as docents, continues and is much appreciated. This year we had refreshments at several locations and add a special thank you to those who provided a little extra for our guests.

While a number of SHA board members worked hard to make the tour a success, board member and tour co-chair Joan Williams deserves special thanks for going the extra mile to make sure all details were taken care of. Let's hope we have such great weather next time, in 2017!

Upcoming Events*****

Shenandoah County Heritage Day, Saturday, April 9, 11am – 3pm, Fort Valley Fire Department, Focus this year on Fort Valley history, but we will have displays on history from every part of the county.

Lecture: "Consolidating Lives: Integration in Shenandoah County", Tuesday, Feb. 16 at 7pm, Shenandoah County Library, Edinburg, Given by Zachary Hottel, Shenandoah County Library Archivist

2016 Symphony of Stitches, hosted by the Edinburg Heritage Foundation, will be held Saturday, March 26 at St. Paul's Heritage Ctr 106 S. High St. Edinburg. Theme this year is vintage kitchen utensils up to early electric appliances. The morning presentation by Rod Graves, from the Luray Valley Museum, will be about early cooking implements & vessels from open hearth up to electricity. The afternoon session will feature vintage clothing mainly from the 1890s and beyond and will discuss work vs play and upstairs vs downstairs. For more information, tickets/reservations email to stitch-esva@gmail.com or call 540-984-9309.

SHA Board of Directors

2015

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Donation given to support preservation of historic Dosh House

SHA board member Wendy Pieper presents check to Strasburg Guard members (L-R) Nick Racey, Guard Commander Richard Kleese and member Bill Racey.

The historic Dosh House was a popular destination for visitors at our 2015 homes tour. Everyone was impressed with the continuing efforts of the Strasburg Guards, Sons of Confederate Veterans to preserve this important 18th C. building.

The SHA board believes that part of our mission is to support efforts of this kind and so voted to donate \$250.00 to the Guards to be used for preservation work. Board Member Wendy Pieper made the presentation at the Guards regular monthly dinner in January. We applaud the hard work that the group has made over the years to restore and care for the historic Dosh House.

Nominating Committee

Each year one half of the SHA board is up for re-election, with the other half continuing their two-year terms. Nominating Committee Chair Wendy Pieper has reported that Barbara Adamson, Bill Foster, Sue Foster, Dee Keister, Marie Spence, Linda Williams and Polly Wilson are up for re-election to a two-term. Bill Foster decided not to seek re-election though he will continue as our webmaster, which we greatly appreciate. Continuing board member Shirley Maddox has also decided to retire from the board. Therefore, at the annual meeting we will vote on one new nominee, Carla Wallen, to a two-year term, and Randy Painter to a one-year term to replace Shirley on the board. Carla has served on the board previously and was a charter board member back in 2001; we welcome her back. And we're delighted to have Randy join us. Many thanks to Bill and Shirley for their service on the board.

Yoo Hoo! Dues are due in February!

We hope you will continue your support of SHA by renewing your membership. Our annual membership fee of \$20 is due in February and is much appreciated. Help us continue to support historic preservation in Strasburg, offer interesting programs and an informative newsletter. Thank you!

A Little History: ICONS AND ICE CREAM

The Strasburg Tastee Freez

By

George Hoffman



Soft-serve is one of those decidedly American iconic treats most of us have grown up with. It's sweet, it's creamy, it's cold and refreshing, and it's versatile, in that it can stand on its own, with different flavors, or it can be the base for some wonderful things like sundaes and shakes, by just adding a few toppings and such.

Soft-serve, by definition, is basically ice cream, usually lower in fat than other forms of ice cream, stored at a slightly

higher temperature, and with air pumped in. In fact, the more air that's pumped in, the creamier and lighter, and even tastier the ice cream is. The less air, of course, the heavier and icier it is.

There are lots of myths, discrepancies, and conjectures out there as to when and where the first 'soft-serve' ice cream was developed. There's the story about Tom Carvel, the founder of Carvel Ice Cream having a flat tire along the road in Hartsdale, NY one day about 1934. The ice cream he was hauling got soft, so he had to sell it quickly. The crowd loved it so much, he began working on ways to produce this softer variety on purpose. Two years later, he had built his first ice cream shop, and began developing his own ice cream machinery.

There are those who believe that J.F. McCullough and his son, Alex, ice cream shop owners in the 20s, created soft-serve after surveying folks as to whether they liked ice cream before it was frozen hard. Apparently, the story goes that, after some experimentation, they bought an ice cream machine from a vendor, then had a machinist alter or customize the machine to create and maintain the consistency and texture of ice cream just before it fully froze and hardened. They eventually named their business Dairy Queen.

There's a similar, but much earlier story about the Kohr brothers, who experimented with both ice cream makers and the recipe for the ice cream itself, until they invented what many now call frozen custard (because the final recipe contained eggs, and began as a cooked custard). They began by selling their treats from a stand on Coney Island, and later expanded until they had stores in ten states!

Probably most surprising was the urban myth (and it is, indeed an urban myth, I found out

after further research!) that Margaret Thatcher was, in her younger days as a chemist, one of a team who created soft-serve. Purportedly, this team researched and developed a recipe and method for both decreasing the fat and sugar, and then pumping air into ice cream as it was made to eventually create a new smoother, creamier, and tastier frozen treat.

It's hard to know what to believe really, since, regionally, people love to lay claim to such important 'discoveries.' What does seem to be historically correct, at least, is that one of the most popular and enduring businesses in the country, Tastee Freez, was borne of two men's tenacious quest to find ways to improve upon the creation and serving of the cold creamy stuff. In 1950, an inventor, Leo Moranz, and an entrepreneur, Harry Axene, developed and began selling a new ice cream machine, the technology of which far surpassed any previously known. In less than 5 years, walk-up stands called Tastee Freez had opened across the country, selling sundaes and cones to an adoring public. These were early franchises, allowed to use the Tastee Freez name in exchange for renting the soft-serve pump necessary to operate each freezer.

Over the years, probably as a means of competing with other fast food franchise, Tastee Freez stores expanded their menus to include non-frozen, non-dessert foods, such as hamburgers, hot dogs, and french fries. The company has endured this competition, as well as periodic unstable economy, and has proven itself as one of the longest-lasting franchises in history.

Today, Tastee Freez has stores in 12 states, and there are 8 still open in the state of Virginia. They also have their freezer/dispensers in Wienerschnitzel and Hamburger Stand locations in AZ, CA, CO, IL, LA, NM, NV, TX, UT, WA, and WY. It has become an American tradition.

THE IMPACT ON ONE SMALL COMMUNITY—The Strasburg Tastee Freez

Nowhere was that tradition more important or revered than in small communities like Strasburg. In the early days, there wasn't much small-town competition for the fast food and ice cream dollar. There were no McDonald's and Burger King restaurants in every little town like there are today. And not only did fast food become a way of life for some, but as a small-town hangout for young people, The Tastee Freez, at least in our community, was almost a sociological phenomenon. It began with two walk-up windows, and later, an eat-in space was added on the side. It was the place many young people stopped on their way home from school; the place many of us chose to meet up with friends; it was the convenient place on Saturday nights to run across the street from the teen dance at the fire hall to get a coke, or some food or ice cream refreshment. I'm giving away my age here, but in my day, most all the girls who went to the teen dance could be seen running across the street to the Tastee Freez, or up main street to the Virginia Restaurant, with a comb in one hand, and a quarter in the other...for a Coke, of course.

A great deal of nostalgic value is placed on our Tastee Freez. I believe part of that has to do with the instant recall that our senses of smell and taste can evoke, even when one only thinks about something that smelled or tasted good to them. I think warm fuzzy feelings come over us too when we remember that place we 'stopped after school every day,' or 'where I had my first hot fudge sundae,' or even 'where I used to take my girlfriend on Fridays after the football game.'

In January of 2013, the 'Downtown Strasburg' group shared a picture that was given them by my sister, Pat Pingley Striker, on Facebook of the Tastee Freez. The picture was of the Tastee Freez

in its earliest days, circa 1954, when it was just a walk-up ice cream stand. That picture obviously struck a chord with a lot of folks in the area. That one Facebook post garnered 540 'likes,' 129 comments, and was shared 332 times! Kathy Kehoe, some time later that same year, while considering writing this article, also asked some questions about people's recollections and thoughts about the place. When I was asked to write this article and share my thoughts, I too, wanted to hear from people what kinds of things stuck in their minds about growing up in Strasburg around this magical business.

Memories poured forth from so many people! Memories of ice cream, creme-de-menthe shakes, hot fudge, and wet nuts; memories of dates, and friends hanging out, and of some of the folks who worked there over the years; memories of steamed hamburgers, foot-long hot dogs, of salty fries, and even the taste of the mustard; memories of playing in the town run with ice cream cups, of the sound of the bug zapper over the ice cream window, and of dads whose special treats to their kids was stopping for ice cream. There were far too many wonderful things to even begin to print and share them all here. One thing that I noted surfaced quite a few times: 'that was my first job.' I wonder just how many people they employed over the years that the Tastee Freez was in business here.

Of course, I have quite a few memories of the 'Tastee Freez years' too. I share so many of the memories above, for instance from the bug-zappers to the steamed hamburgers to the milk shakes, and beyond. I distinctly remember Mrs. Brown, who used to run the place, in her starched white uniform, with the little paper envelope style hat on her head. I remember hearing a story (probably myth, or at least elaborated upon until it was almost unbelievable!) about my aunt, who was eating a strawberry sundae from there when she bit into one of the nearly whole berries and noted an unfamiliar crunchy feeling in her mouth. The story goes that she pulled the strawberry out of her mouth, and found a very large black water bug had been hiding in her strawberry!

Oddly, my best memories of the Tastee Freez were of two occasions when I wasn't even on the premises. You see, my brother was one of the people whose first job was there. This was my *older* brother...who, incidentally, I'm sure, considered me lower than grave dirt at the time, and whose disgust for me was ever present in every disdainful look, every ugly voice tone, and every low-handed form of trickery and blame. We did not get along. But on two occasions, by some strange tilt of the moon, or perhaps the effects on his brain of inhaling the by-products of smoking French fry grease, or maybe even the endorphins that were released as he was handed his paychecks, he surprised me by bringing home, and even SHARING, a bag of leftover hamburgers and fries from the night's work. In those days, instead of throwing food away, they'd often just give the leftovers to the employees to take home. So on these two nights in particular, my older brother and I sat down late at the kitchen table, and we polished off several steamy warm flat burgers each, along with some soggy fries, and we were civil, almost friendly.

Our Strasburg Tastee Freez closed down back in the late 70s or early 80s, and another business, a sub and pizza shop occupied the building for a short time. Soon, the building was razed and replaced by the parking lot for Strasburg's new Town Hall. Looking back, I'm sure the facility itself had seen better days, and was probably in need of upgrades, even bringing it up to 'code'. I know, however, even more today than I realized then, that many of us hated to lose this piece of our lives, this important part of the community's heritage. It's also, however, an indisputable fact, considering the outpouring of emotional responses and memories we received on Facebook, that its impact on us was immense, and its impression indelible.

A Little Folk History—Tastee Freez

From The Memories of Strasburg Folks

Frank Casper Zirkle Jr: My father was a town cop when I was growing up, so that was the epic center for us young kids- Gary Grant, Jay Winkfield, and myself to go hang out there. We liked to play in the town creek jumping from bank to bank, catching minnows, crayfish and shooting water spiders & snakes with our BB guns. My aunt Lois Zirkle, dad's sister, used to work there also. Everything was good there for a long time. I don't know if it is still there or not, but there use to be a concrete slab that extended out from the wall and covered a portion of the bank next to the creek that we use to play around on. It was nothing like going there in the summertime and late fall to the outside window and seeing and hearing all the bugs being zapped.

Phil Vance: I remember the song, "Hey Jude" by the Beatles playing on the jukebox. My mother was a manager and she was my boss. I remember cockroaches outside around the garbage bin along with ducks and geese in the Town Run. One my duties was to take the trash out.

Gayle Crowder Ryman: Total happiness for Sandra Miller and me to go down for a cone. We had one about every day on the way to the pool on our bikes.

Jim Campbell: I can remember before the Tastee Freeze was built, there was an old house that my dad managed to buy all the hard-wood flooring before they tore it down. Dad, my brothers Gary, Tommy and I went in there and removed the flooring and took it home. Our house on West King to this day, has that walnut flooring. Soon after, we had TASTEE FREEZE!

Cindy Racey: I loved Tastee Freeze! It was always a struggle to decide whether to order at the window or go inside...lol. The hamburgers were thin and there were skinny fries....both so good. The soft serve ice cream was the best. We would get a cup and sit on the bridge while eating it.

Belinda Palmer: We used to play cards at the picnic tables out back in the summers, and I can still recite "Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame-seed bun"! The special sauce was very like Thousand Island dressing.

Merille Long: The Tastee Freez was the Strasburg version of Arnolds Drive-in. My favorite shake(s) were the grasshopper and black walnut. I was actually involved in a diving competition with some of my buddies where we would see who could dive in the creek off the side (not top) of the bridge without getting hurt. You had to dive real shallow and push off with your hands on the bottom when you hit the water. I actually won!

Candy Grimsley: My Grandfather Bausserman used to push me there in a stroller to get an ice cream cone. My Mom would dress me up to look cute & he'd bring me back with ice cream from head to toe.

Bud McDonald: I worked for the folks that owned the Tastee Freez shops in Woodstock and Strasburg. I started at 75 cents an hour but they upped that to a dollar after 6 months.

John Phillip Painter I have vivid memories of standing on the bridge eating a cone of Tastee Freez that was covered in a thin layer of dried chocolate dip. On the opposite side of the creek was the mesmerizing blue violet neon 12 inch circle that attracted the thousands of night flying insects to their death by electrocution. The random but continuous zapping of their exploding bodies warn all in the area of the danger of high voltage.

Despite the occasional whiff of soured milk from spillage on the sidewalk, the Saturday night treat of a trip to the Tastee Freez enriched my childhood in ways that only those that were blessed with a small town up-bringing can truly understand.

Strasburg Heritage Association

PO Box 525

Strasburg, A 22657

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www.strasburgvaheritage.org

Membership Application & Renewal

Enclosed: Annual Dues for 2016: \$20.00

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Telephone: _____

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MEMBERSHIP: _____ Cost is \$20.00

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