

Paradise Past

THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE

PARADISE
Historical
Society

VOLUME 18, Fall 2018

Henryville Station, 1908

Photo courtesy Steamtown NHS



Many thanks to Kim Williams for his October presentation, “History and Mystery” about the DL&W railroad, from Mt. Bethel to Paradise. Fascinating! We have interesting topics at every meeting — open to all, and refreshments are served. Come hear some stories about this beautiful place we call Paradise!

Jane

Jane Niering, *President*

END OF YEAR meetings

In November, we heard from Bernadine Lennon, of the Greene Dreher Historical Society. A retired US Navy Commander, Bernadine has done a lot of research on WWI and the role of the YMCA during those years. The information in her talk was a complete surprise to most of us, including the link between the YMCA and the Carlton Family. Check the next issue of *Paradise Past* for a summary.



Our holiday meeting will be held Sunday, December 2nd at 2PM at the Ace Store, thanks to the generous invitation of owner Susan Layton. This is a members-only meeting — if you aren't a member yet, send in your membership coupon today, or you can join at the door. See you there!

[EHS](#)

Fall

COLLECTING, PRESERVING
& DISSEMINATING PARADISE HISTORY

Walking the

KNAUF FAMILY PRESERVE

Photos by Kim Williams

So in 1998, Monroe County voted to create an Open Space bond fund. A year later, county Commissioners Mario Scavello, Donna Asure and Jim Cadue finalized a plan to guide the county's future development. The county was adding population by leaps and bounds. People worried about overbuilding, overcrowding. "Home" was losing its natural character.

County Open Space money could be used as a match for Keystone funding. To take part, a township usually had to have matching funds.

Paradise was pretty rural, and people liked it that way. So in 2001, Paul Reisch, Cheryl Phillips, Edie Stevens, Don Miller and a few others got signatures to put a referendum on the ballot in Paradise. Before Election Day, we called neighbors and friends, and the referendum passed with about 70 percent of the vote.

That meant there was local money to match county and the state funds. So the answer is yes — citizens voted to set aside tax money for this purpose. And unlike some state taxes, this money can't be used for anything but buying, conserving, and maintaining land for public use.

Paradise's first purchases were Skywood Park, the former site of PMI in the Sky, then Ice Lake Natural Area, and 7 Pines Park, all in 2002. Rosalie Osbaker's two acres were

The Spring issue of *Paradise Past* included Ralph Knauf's memories of growing up in Paradise Township. In August, members walked the Knauf farm property, now a public preserve owned by Paradise Township. Carol Hillestad led the walk around the perimeter of what is now an open field. We saw Indian peace pipe and other fungus, several kinds of lichen, "reindeer moss," and native wildflowers. This is a summary of her talk.

Many people in Paradise knew Ralph Knauf and the Knauf family. I met him at the real estate closing on this property in 2009.

Jacob Knauf started a chicken and egg operation here and sold eggs to people at Buck Hill Falls and elsewhere. The stand of evergreens at the back of the field was the Christmas tree farm that came later. The barn stood where the parking area is now, across Carlton Road from the house. The property is just under 35 acres and connects with the Merry Hill trail, which is part of Mt. Airy's trail network.

Ralph's property was the fifth property acquired by Paradise Township for public use. The Township has purchased ten parcels, totaling 1,293 acres. That doesn't count land protected by Pocono Heritage Land Trust. As you drive 940 toward Mount Pocono, for instance, the 400 acres on either side is the Kurmes Nature Preserve. Instead of rows of houses, we'll always have a natural view there.

Preserving Land for Future Generations

It all started at the state level in 1993, with the Keystone Fund. Set up by the legislature almost unanimously, this puts a small sliver of the real estate transfer tax to work protecting important local resources. The catch: local municipalities must be able to match the state funds.



Shirley Lansdowne shared memorabilia of her mother's WWII work in the Civilian Defense Corps at the meeting.

A watchtower for plane-spotters was located in the Knauf farm field, where Shirley's mother did her CDC volunteer work.



next in 2005. Then in 2006 the Nothstein Preserve, about 150 acres.

Ralph's family homestead was next, in 2009. Don Miller had met with Ralph often, and kept a conversation going about protecting the land. Ralph's son Tim didn't really like the idea. Mount Airy had just opened nearby, and Tim thought the property was worth, or would be worth, a lot more. But Ralph felt strongly that he didn't want to see the farm developed, ever.

One thing to know about Open Space properties — maybe you've heard people say it's a boondoggle because the Township overpays when they buy land. But open space regulations don't let the Township pay more than appraised value. And it takes at least two appraisals and sometimes more, to come to what that number should be.

Another objection is that when land becomes open space, it comes off the tax rolls. That's true. But to my knowledge, except for about 10 acres, all the land in the

Township that has been conserved by the public was in Clean and Green, which keeps taxes low for large undeveloped parcels. For instance, the Clean and Green tax bill on one 777-acre parcel the township bought was less than \$500 a year.

So Ralph didn't want the property to be developed, and he had his way. Don Miller and I went to the closing. Ralph and Tim were there, and of course a bunch of lawyers. He seemed so happy to be doing this. We chatted a little after the closing, and that was that.

The Township went on to acquire more property — the old Lazy Rock Lodge, that 777 acres, the new Van Buskirk Preserve on Cranberry Creek Road and the Swiftwater Forest Preserve off Donaldson Road.

Then I got a letter from Ralph. He'd been seeing some articles I was writing about hikes around the county. And then I met someone who knew him very well, Joan Powlus, who is here. Somehow, it seemed to make sense



to talk to Ralph and get his story about growing up in Paradise.

So he and I have met a few times since then, the first in 2017. His brother, son, and wife had all died recently, so those were hard times for him. The transcript of our "official" talk is in the Historical Society archives. [PHS](#)



Helpers NEEDED



Could you spare an hour or so every month to help PHS stay in touch with members? Tasks include mailing notices to members who don't have email and sending renewal letters to members (postal expenses reimbursed, of course). Please call Laura Layton, Secretary, at 570 839-5702. [PHS](#)

UPCOMING PHS MEETINGS


**DECEMBER 2ND
HOLIDAY PARTY
AT THE ACE STORE
SHOW & TELL • FLY FISHING
POCONO HAY-VEN
NAME THAT RESORT
AND MORE!**

Visit ParadiseHistorical.org for Updates!

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

STOP AT KASA'S IN PARADISE VALLEY AND

Dave Buchter, owner of Kasa's Pizza in Paradise Valley, remembers being captivated as a child by the historic photos displayed at Cooper's Seafood House in Scranton. "I'd stand there and read about those places and people," he said. "It fascinated me." When Bill Coffman gave Dave a stack of old photos, he had an "aha!" moment. "Why not do that here? My general manager, Susie Eckhart, has a real creative talent," he says. "We did a lot of research, talked to others who had photos. Susie scanned and cleaned up the images, and framed them creatively."

Today, the photo collection lines the walls of the dining room at Kasa's. Dave and Susie are on the hunt for more photos and information with the goal of expanding the display of photos of Paradise and vicinity. "I'm really focused on schools and churches right now," Susie says. "The Flood of 1955 is next on my list." 



PHS Vice President John Layton met Susie Eckhart and Dave Buchter at Kasa's and discussed their mutual interest in local history. Part of the "Kasa's Collection" is seen on the wall behind them.

**Become a
Member
Today!**

YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS!

Please help Paradise Historical Society collect, protect & share the interesting history of our area.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student or Senior (65+) - \$8.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate - \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple - \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining - \$100.00 |

First Name: _____

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Please send the completed form and check (no cash) to:
Paradise Historical Society,
P.O. Box 94, Henryville, PA 18332

*The Directors & Officers of
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