

FEBRUARY 23, 2009 F. A. H. P. NEWS

Let's Turn It Around! It went something like this: "Europe had been locked in the Dark Ages for hundreds of years, and there seemed no hope. Since the Fall of the Roman Empire just after 400 A.D., no enlightened society or progress had emerged to take its place. People were largely ignorant and illiterate. A drunken beggar emerged from an underground bar in Vienna, moved into the street, and started belting at the top of his lungs, 'Ach, du lieber Augustine'. Soon a chorus of others joined in, the merriment became contagious, and from this Europeans embraced hope. In the 15th century, things started to get better and the Renaissance began."

Our mass media seems compelled to tell us the multitude of negative things that are happening daily. We know things are bad and times are hard. Can't they seize on a smidgen of good news somewhere in the world and give us one bright headline? This process might cause other good things to follow.

How many have heard of the Panic of 1837? Or the devastating rate cutting of 1873 that soon forced most railroads (including the Wilmington & Western) into bankruptcy, and the loss of many jobs? Present-day journalists did not experience the Depression of the 1930's, but they write about it and refer to it. Only by the present generation has it been called the GREAT Depression. I believe the unemployment rate reached 25%. President Roosevelt, in one of his "Fireside Chats", told the American people "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself".

One of World War I's popular marching songs went something like this:

"Smile, smile, smile,
Where there's a lucifer to light your fag
Smile, boys, that's the style.
What's the use of worryin'?
It never was worth-while,
So, pack up your troubles in your old kit bag
And smile, SMILE, S M I L E !

During World War II, this was one of the popular songs of the day:

"You must accentuate the Positive,
Eliminate the Negative,
Latch on to the Affirmative,
Don't mess with mister in between."

About 1950, MGM's annual Christmas musical appearing at first-run theatres during the holidays was called "Good News", starring June Allyson and Peter Lawford. It didn't have a particular message, but was happy and uplifting. We know today's economic news is bad, but let's not dwell on it and exploit it. Positive psychology can help turn things around.

The Annual Meeting of F.A.H.P. was held in the auditorium at the Center for Creative Arts in Yorklyn last Tuesday, February 17. We shared the big room with a traveling Smithsonian exhibit on American fences, displayed in small towns across America. Yorklyn had been selected as one of these small towns. Two new Directors, Dee Durham and Kevin Worsh, were elected to the Board for 3-year terms, and Mike May and Rob Robison were re-elected for terms of the same length. Attended by over 50 members and chaired by President Mike May, the entertainment consisted of a power-point presentation by Butch Cannard, illustrating our many events and projects during the past year.

On Wednesday, the Collections Committee, chaired by Greg Landrey and with 12 in attendance, met to further discuss our Ethics Policy. Since more thought needs to be given to this important document, it was decided to defer action by the Board on this until the May meeting.

Finally, on Thursday, the Quarterly Board meeting and election of officers took place in the F.A.H.P. office with 18 in attendance. Following the report of the Nominating Committee chaired by Stan Wilcox, Steve Bryce was elected president, Greg Landrey vice president, Richard Bernard secretary, and Bob Reilly treasurer. The Board also elected Emil Christofano to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Mary Hopkins, which term expires in 2010. Ruth and I used our authority of appointment to name Bob Reilly to the Board for one year. Our new LOGO, prepared by Sarah Stanley, was presented, and will be used on our future publications and promotional items. While there were some production costs, Sarah donated her time and expertise to this project, and we thank her.

Starting today, Rose Ann Hoover, Catherine Coin, and Dan Citron are attending the regional Museum Conference in Ocean City, MD, and expect to return late Tuesday with many ideas helpful to FAHP and the Preserve. Friday morning, Feb. 27, at 11:00, Rose Ann is calling a meeting of the Museum Committee to decide on interim plans for upgrading the viewing area.

Work is progressing on disassembling the Stanley Model 607, and the building of the 3rd track in the shop's basement. This week, we hope to begin installing the steel shelves on the back wall of the garage for more efficient storage of small parts and supplies.

I want to personally thank Mike May for his leadership in heading our organization since the summer of 2007, and his perfect attendance at Board meetings despite the fact that his home in Northport, MI, is over 800 miles from Auburn Heights. Congratulations to our 2009 officers elected last week. All of us appreciate their intense commitment to the success and goals of F.A.H.P., and their plan to implement the action steps outlined in our new Strategic Plan. This will take the help of all of you. THANK YOU!

Tom