

THE LANDMARK

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Newsletter of the Friends of Old Annville
P.O. Box 99, Annville, PA 17003

A Labor of Love: Preserving History at 450 South White Oak Street

President's Message, by Michael Schroeder

"City life wasn't for me," explains Mark Leshner, as he and his wife Danielle pause in their work to offer a visitor a tour of their recently-purchased historic home at 450 South White Oak Street. Layers of fine white plaster dust and specks of sawdust cover his red baseball cap, black t-shirt, baggy blue jeans, and well-worn work boots. A lean, wiry man in his early 30s, with a calm, easy manner and ready smile, Mark, an infectious disease pharmacist by trade, describes himself as "a science and math guy" who also loves history, and who's found great satisfaction working with his hands for as long as he can remember.

Born and raised in Chambersburg, PA, to the fourth generation of woodworkers and members of the Brethren in Christ Church, he and Danielle met when both served as resident advisors at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. She was studying occupational therapy. After graduating, both found jobs at Hershey Medical Center and started looking for a home "where the people are down to earth and have a strong sense of community." So when the historic property at 450 South White Oak Street went up for sale, they decided to settle in Annville.

Originally built by Abraham Raiguel in the late 1700s, and added onto in the ensuing decades, the 5,200-plus square-foot home features 30-inch thick limestone walls, with heavy crown and fluted molding throughout, solid wood floors, six bedrooms, a large stone fireplace in the great room, and a woodburning stove in the kitchen. Much of the original cast-iron hardware still adorns the window sashes, exterior shutters, door transoms, and doors.

"We want to keep as much of the original home as possible," Mark explains as he guides a visitor past half-finished projects in the various rooms, along with clusters of carpentry and plastering tools, neat stacks of salvaged materials, and tidy piles of construction debris. They've made much progress, he says, in large part thanks to their dedicated parents who've spent tireless hours contributing to their new home.

The first big job, just completed, was to replace the aging roof of the barn with seamless steel to help maintain the structural integrity of the roof-boards and rafters. As they worked on replacing the roof, Mark explains, "a father and son" from the area they'd met only the day before stopped by to lend a hand. "That's what I mean about a strong sense of community," he says. "Danielle and I just feel really blessed to be here."

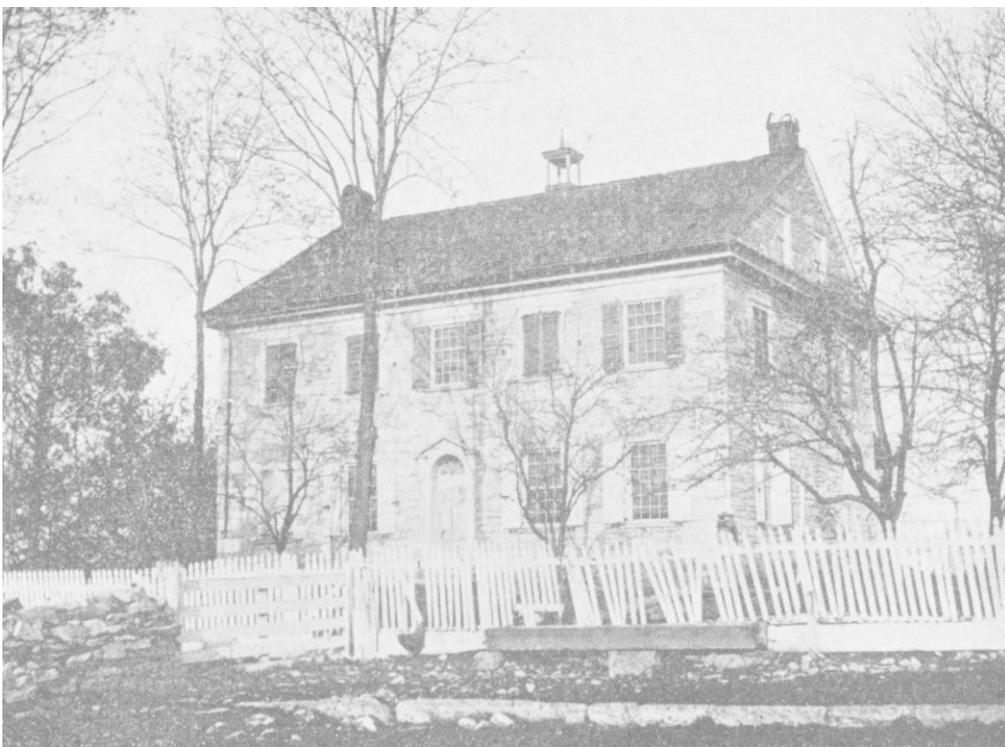


Mark's enchantment with history is also evident in the pride he takes in showing a visitor the original 1765 deed to the property, carefully encased in a sturdy glass-covered frame. He and Danielle hope to display it prominently, along with their custom family-made furniture, once the work on their home is complete.

Many challenges remain, he says, including the smokehouse outbuilding, with its rotting roof, floorboards, and door. Fortunately, the stonemasonry and heavy posts and beams remain as solid as the day they were installed more than 200 years ago, also true of the nearby barn.



If Mark and Danielle Lesher feel blessed to call Annville their home, it's also true that Annville is blessed to have such hardworking, community-minded neighbors with such a keen sense of history and of the intrinsic value of historic preservation. Welcome to Annville, Mark & Danielle!



Above left: Mark Lesher eyeballs the property's smokehouse, with its rotting roof but intact timbers and stone. Above right: Inside the barn, with its still-sturdy beams and rafters. At left: 1895 photograph of the historic home, originally built by Abraham Raiguel and his family in the late 1700s.

Breaking Bread & Sharing Stories: Annual Dinner Recap

A grand time was had by 70-plus FOOA members during our Annual Dinner Meeting on Saturday, November 12 at the American Legion Post in Annville. Copious expressions of gratitude were extended to outgoing Co-President Owen Moe, Treasurer David Palanzo, and Board Members-at-Large Karen Feather and Keith Kreamer.

An equally warm welcome was extended to President Michael Schroeder, Treasurer Brian Nornhold, and our three new Board Members-at-Large – Becky Gacono-Harlan, Jim Gill, and Tucker Hull.



Featured speakers Helen Lupinetti (at center) and Mary Willman, in a panel presentation moderated by Vice President Paul Fullmer, enchanted the assembled guests with stories of “Growing Up in Old West Annville.” A special thanks to Annual Dinner organizers Owen Moe & Rachel Noll for a delightful evening!

A Force of Nature Passes: Remembering Blanche Schaeffer

We are saddened to report that FOOA Founding Member and true “force of nature” Blanche M. Schaeffer passed away this past November 8, at 95 years young.

In honor of her life and work, the next issue of *The Landmark* will feature several stories on Blanche and her tireless efforts over many decades to make Annville and the Lebanon Valley a better place to live. Rachel Noll is coordinating efforts to compile reminiscences and reflections on the myriad ways that Blanche contributed to our town and region. If you have stories to share or reflections to offer, please be in touch with Rachel, by email at rrnoll@comcast.net, by phone at 717.867.2137, or by post at 1673 Louser Road, Annville PA, 17003.

In the meantime, here we offer a brief word of remembrance and gratitude. Thank you, Blanche, for all you’ve done. Your good energy, generosity of spirit, and indefatigable devotion to your community will be missed by the so very many people whose lives you’ve touched.

May you rest in peace.

Obituaries



Blanche M. Schaeffer

May 2, 1921 - November 8, 2016

ANNVILLE

Blanche M. Schaeffer, 95, died Tuesday, November 8, in Hill Farm Estates, North Annville Twp. She was the wife of Vincent J. Schaeffer who died in 1994.

Born in Woodland, CA on May 2, 1921, she was the daughter of the late Thomas Oakley and Min-

nie Boltz Hughes Wolf and was raised with her grandparents, Harry and Lottie Boltz.

For 35 years, she ran Schaeffer’s Group Daycare out of her home in Annville. She also worked for Annville Products, Hershey Foods Corp., and she did sewing for a local dry cleaner.

Blanche was a 1940 graduate of Annville High School, a member of Annville United Methodist Church and served on the Annville Council of Churches. She was a 30 year member and served as president and vice-president of the Friends of Old Annville. She also served on its fund raising committee and was the founder of Old Annville Days which she served as chairman for 20 years. Blanche was a Cub Scout Den Mother, founded the Annville Band Parents organization in 1958, served on the Annville West Election Board, and was a member of the Questers. She received the Citizenship Award from the Annville-Cleona Jaycees, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Friends of Old Annville, and the Paul Harris Fellow Award from the Annville Rotary Club. She was instrumental in the moving and renovating of the original railroad station in Annville. She had also received a plaque for voting for 50 years, never missing an election.

Blanche’s greatest enjoyments in life came from her children and anything that involved caring for children, collecting antiques and restoring things, and flowers. Her garden was showcased on the local “Flower Tours” in Annville.



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Please note that your MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE can be found on the mailing label of this issue of *The Landmark*. Please send your dues and address change to Rachel Noll, 1673 Louser Road, Annville, PA, 17003-8856. Questions? Call Rachel at (717) 867-2137.

Individual & Student \$ 5.00 Family (2+ persons) \$ 10.00 Business \$ 25.00 Friend of FOOA \$ 50.00 ★
Benefactor \$ 100.00 § Founder \$ 250 ❖

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