

SEWICKLEY
= VALLEY =
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SINCE 1973



A letter from SVHS Board of Directors President, Marty O'Brien

I am pleased to report that we have completed a positive, successful year in positioning the society for the future. The majority of updates were reported at our annual May 21 meeting.

Since becoming President, I have noted to the membership and board that my objective is to modernize the society to ensure its future viability in a very complex and changing world.

In 2024 – 2025:

- We instituted prudent financial discipline to operate in the black (break even at minimum) which resulted in a 2024-25 operating profit after many years of operating in the red.
- We received a game changing \$89,000 donation from Duncan P. Whittaker, Jr. Whittaker grew up in Sewickley and named SVHS as a beneficiary to his estate. The donation, in conjunction with a favorable market, increased the value of our long-term fund portfolio and checking account by over 30% from this time last year. The board of directors voted to use 50% of the Whittaker donation towards the Society's digitalization/oral history initiatives.
- We held our inaugural Annual Fundraiser at Wilpen Hall. Our "Speakeasy in the Rose Garden" was a sold-out event that raised over \$30,000. Establishing this annual fundraiser is critical to keeping our yearly budget in the black moving forward.
- Our long-standing lecture series expanded to include a partnership with The Lindsey Theater, exploring history through film and inviting experts on the films' topics for Q&A's after each screening.
- The popular and now annual Winter Tea event was held for a second year in February at Allegheny Country Club.
- Weekend family programming – including our first Historical Society Open House and our second Antique Appraisal and Donation Day – increased our availability to the community, engaging specifically with families in the Valley. We are planning more family-friendly events for this coming year.
- After a membership survey and convening of an ad hoc Communications Committee, improvements are being made to the distribution of the society's Signals newsletter, the organization's website, and its membership database software, moving to streamline membership services and increase consistency.
- This year we established a paid internship with the Public History Graduate Program at Duquesne University. Funded by a member of SVHS, this partnership opens a once a year, semester-long, paid internship position enabling SVHS to attract the best talent from Duquesne's students. It strengthens the growing relationship with the university's Public History program – from which all three of the SVHS Administrative Assistants who help with the immediate and long-term work objectives since 2024 have graduated.

Other points of note:

- Since January our administrative assistant has spent 270 hours processing and accessioning over 350 items into the Collections at SVHS. These items include donations such as a Quaker Valley letterman sweater and original prints of the famed "Turn of the Tide of the Rebellion" painting.

- We applied for and received our first two grants. In November we received a \$5,000 grant from the Rust Foundation, applied to our digitization fund, to digitize collections such as the James Over Rust collection. In January we received a \$5,000 matching grant from the Sewickley Valley Community Fund to go towards the updating of our off-site storage and archival solutions.
- We are increasing the visibility of SVHS at its 200 Broad Street home. Light pole signage has been placed in front of our building facing Broad Street and we are working with Sewickley Borough to place a large banner on the building side facing Route 65 and the Sewickley Bridge.
- The B. G. Shields Memorial Garden is now more easily accessible and enjoyable due to the installation of a new walk-way entrance off of Broad Street. If you have not experienced being in this beautiful, intimate space, I suggest you do so.

Challenges:

- We continue to experience a drop in membership. Please share with your friends and neighbors the importance of being a member. The cost to join is very affordable and we have kept the cost low to encourage membership.
- We are ready and able to capture oral histories of community members so we can memorialize their stories and our understanding of their time and experience in the history of the Sewickley Valley, but we need your help to identify and convince these individuals to participate in this program.
- We need to bring the Collection into the late 20th Century. We continue to seek donations of post-World War 2 material, for example materials related to the eras of the Korean and Vietnam wars and life in the 1970-90s. History marches on and this material tells an important story for the community.
- We created the Digital and Oral Histories Fund which now has over \$66,000, but to fully recognize the goals of the project to conserve, digitalize and organize content from 50 + years of archival history it will cost over \$100,000. This project will allow members and scholars to conduct research and ensure the long-term preservation of our core work. Please consider helping us to make this project a reality.

Finally, I want to once more bring your attention to the Duncan P. Whittaker, Jr. Estate. What Mr. Whittaker left to our society was transformational and critical to our future. As we move towards that future, SVHS needs your continued financial support to provide the best experience for our members and for future generations. We hope that you will keep us in mind when you are reviewing your will and building your legacy.

I wish to extend my thanks to a number of people who helped SVHS thrive and grow this year. Our executive director, Amanda Schaffer, for her leadership and enthusiasm. Our administrative assistant Deanna Berryman for her collection processing work and valuable event assistance. SVHS Board member Robin Bolea who through her hard work as our Fundraiser chair, set the bar for future fundraisers. To my fellow board members for their commitment to moving SVHS forward.

I thank you all – our members and community partners – for your support and for contributing in time, money, or attendance to another wonderfully successful year at SVHS.

I hope everyone has a great rest of the summer and I look forward to seeing you this fall.

All my best,

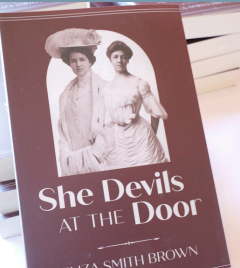
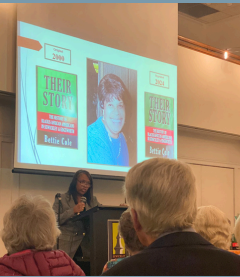
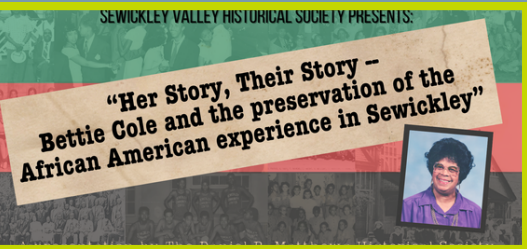
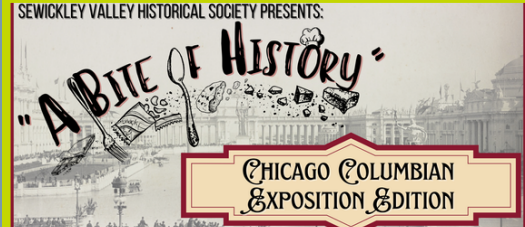
Marty O'Brien

Marty O'Brien, President of the Board of Directors
president@sewickleyhistory.org / (c) 412-848-2585

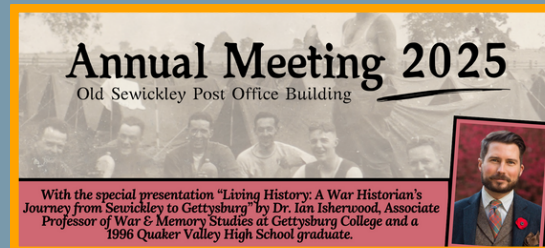
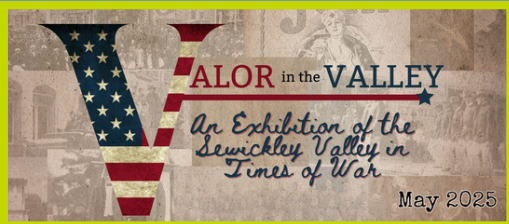
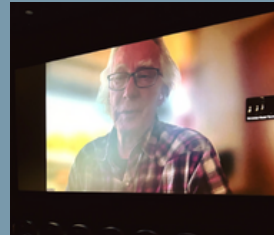
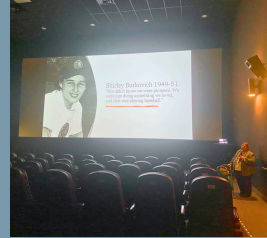
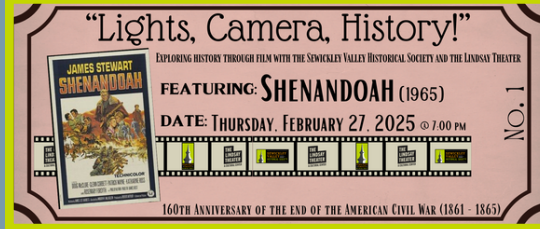


Photos: My grandsons, their friend, and I enjoyed the photobooth at SVHS' first Historical Society Open House this past January!

2024-2025



IN PICTURES



OUR 1ST ANNUAL SIGNATURE FUNDRAISER

Speakeasy in the Rose Garden at Wilpen Hall Saturday, June 7, 2025

Thank You to Our Attendees

Red Rose Level

Aundrea & Michael Ambeliotis
Meghan & Daniel Beasley
Robin Bolea & Stephen Hunter
Caroline Boyce & George DeBolt
Laura & Mike Cherokee
Jennifer DeSalvo
James & Melinda Edwards
Melissa & Kurt Ewen
FNB Sponsorship
Beth & David Genter
Palmira & Graham Gerlach
R.C. Hayden & Cynthia Keller
Ivan & Ruth Hofmann
Shelley Murray
Donielle & Matthew Neal
Marty O'Brien & Lisa Gordon
Janet Oellig
Richard & Marilyn Ogle
Oriole Cleaner Sponsorship
Mark Rengers
Jamie & Pam Rogers
Michele & Sean Rollman
Gabe & Trish Rudek
Darla & Tres Whitlock

White Rose Level

Megan Carter
Mike Cevarr
Connor Cogswell
Tara Davis
Staci Diamond
Margie & Howard Gilfillan
Michael Hammer & Kristen Ehrenberger
Thomas & Janice Hay
Katie Holloway
John & Mary Hotchkiss
Elise Keely
Larry & Marilyn Knotts
Devin & Chad Kosanovich
John & Sadie Kroeck
Frank & Kriss Lally
Kris McCune & David Mateer
Gina Mercurio
James Mohn
Wayne Murphy & Sue Henry
Mary Beth Pastorius
Janice Patz
Kate & Paul Pigman
Christine Poluszejko
James Ransom & Joan Owen
Joel & Anne Simpson
Katherine Stack & Caroline Johnson
Mike Tomana
Shelley & Jeff Wygant
Tamey Zahbrosky

Event In-Kind Sponsors & Donors

**McLaughlin
Distillery**

**RESNICK
ROOFING**
ROOFING • SIDING • SOLAR

GRAHAM GERLACH, CFP®, AEP®
MANAGING DIRECTOR / PRINCIPAL
ROBERTSON STEVENS

Bluecoat®
AMERICAN DRY GIN



FERMATA
BREWING COMPANY



**MCQUEEN
BUILDING
COMPANY**



**PITTSBURGH
PAWS
PET RESORT**



schenley capital



Gracious Donors who wished to remain anonymous

- George Berry, III & Kathleen Hale
- Susan and John Holton
- Claire Hardy, Park Lane Arts LLC
- Marty O'Brien and Lisa Gordon
- Elsie MacKenzie
- Marty and Joanne McDaniel
- Elizabeth and Kevin McManus
- Joseph and Judith Nocito
- Carolyn K. Smith
- Christopher Walther
- Adrienne M. Young

Speakeasy in the Rose Garden 2023



Over
\$30,000
Raised

Thank
You!

CREATING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

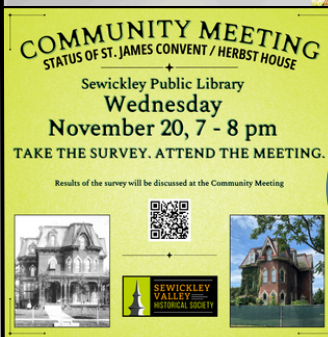
Fun at the
Annual
Sewickley
Harvest
Festival



Herbst
House
Town Hall
Meeting



Established a
paid internship
with Duquesne
University for
the next 4
years



8th Graders
from QVMS
visit twice a
year!

Collections in the
Community --
Brought a preview
of the "Valor in the
Valley" exhibition
to SPL



Architecture
Committee
visited
Carnegie's
GAR Post



Visit our next SPL
exhibition this August!

Increasing SVHS'
visibility at 200
Broad St. with new
signage and a
walkway to the B.G.
Shields Memorial
Garden



UNIQUE DONORS

PATRONS

(\$10,000 and above)

Clapp Charitable & Educational Trust
Marty O'Brien & Lisa Gordon
Duncan P. Whittaker, Jr. Estate

(\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Ann & Frank Cahouet Foundation
George H. & Susan D. Craig Fund
The Rust Foundation
Sewickley Valley Community Fund
Dana Whittaker

(\$1,000 - \$4,999)

Nancy Johns Fine
John & Sadie Kroeck
Charles Murdock
Joseph W. & Judith L. Nocito
Mark Rengers Gallery
Carol & Gary Schurman

SPONSORS

(\$500 - \$999)

Barbara (Bobbi) Bonnett
Mike Cevarr & Kirk Fordham
Susan Cockrell
Verna Corey
Teresa Duff
Margie Shields Gilfillan
Ivan & Ruth Hofmann
Sean & Michele Rollman
Robert & Barbara Cooley Thaw
William & Roberta Walker
Christopher Walther

SUPPORTERS

(\$250 - \$499)

George D. Baker
George J. Berry, III & Kathleen M. Hale
Kathryn & Michael Bryson
William J. & Barbara Burrows
Elisa Cavalier
Connor M. Cogswell
Randy & Shari Dearth
Judy Haluka & Mary Carolyn Nash
Paul F. & Mai-Lan Fagan
Phyllis (Peggy) Entress Ganong
Harlan & Cindy Giles
Cynthia (Dingy) M. Hays
Kathrin (Robin) F. Hays
Art & Trudy Hetherington
Susan R. & John Holton
Susan & Greg Kaminski
Thomas Lechner
Elsie Mackenzie
Joseph Marrone
Martin & Joanne McDaniel
Sally O. McVeigh
Natalie & Bill Mueller
David Nimick

Mary Beth Pastorius
Stephanie & Peter Perry
Photo Organizing Services, LLC
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Sally S. & Ned Ruffin, III
Jeff Smith & R. Virginia Fraser
The Bark Barn, LLC
Henry Fleming Thorne
Beth & Kirk Vincent
Helge & Erika Wehmeier
J. Scott Wendt, III
Malachy Whalen
Carol Yaster
Louise Yeiser
Joe Zemba

FRIENDS

(\$100 - \$249)

Mary Ann Baldridge
Charlotte A. Bober
Robin Bolea
Kathy Brandt
Robert & Gretchen Burnham
T. Ronald & Bonnie Jean Casper
David Caughey
Jacqueline (Patty) Cavalier
Laura & Michael Cherock
Susan Clancy
Patricia Coleman
Joyce D. Cortese
Sally Ann & Joseph Cortese
Hanley Cox
James & Melanie Crockard
James D. & Joan Baker Darby, Jr.
Susan Denny
Denise Ditrach & William Griesacker
Christopher & Kathy Driscoll
Brent & Virginia Nimick Elliot
Carrol W. Ferguson
Eric & Patricia Fulmer
R. Kent & Karen Roche Galey
William & Rosemary Habers
Will & Katharine Harbison
Nell & Tom Hartley
Rita & Joe Hoepf
John & Mary Hotchkiss
Brian & Kate Jeffe
Barbara Johns
Zak & Allegra Stark Jones
Rosalind Kaliden & Robert Barry
Craig & Mary Kirsch
Philip & Leslie Liebscher
Carole & Bill Markus
Glenn & Doty Mauney
Kris McCune & David Mateer, Jr.
Janet McDanel
Elizabeth & Kevin McManus
Ross & Dana Merenda
Elizabeth (Betty) Ann Miller
James Mohn
John & Kathryn Moyer
Wayne Murphy
Bryon & Jennifer Nastasi
William L. Obenour, II
Janet Oellig
John Orndorff, Jr.

Kevin & Marguerite Park
Karen & Richard Parker
John & Cece Poister
David & Susan Riegel Price
Connie & Andy Ruzich
Harton & Judy Semple, Jr.
Sewickley Heights History Center
Judith S. & Edward C. Sherry, Jr.
Carolyn Smith
Frederic F. Smith & Brenda B. Keirn
Susan R. Sour
Donald W. & Elizabeth L. Spalding
Joel & Maria Swanson
Robert & Tina Thomas
Carol S. Thompson
Michael J. Tomana
Albert Vaccaro
William L. Vasiladiotis
Pat & Judie Vescio
Joseph R. "Jay" West
Tres & Darla Whitlock
R. Bruce Williamson
Shelley & Jeffery Wygant
P. Alvin & Mary K. Zamba
Linda Zane
Margaret (Missy) Zimmerman

Thank You!

Designations in the categories above are based on the total giving of a single membership from July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025 across all funding opportunities, including, but not limited to, in excess of dues, general fund, restricted funds, fundraiser attendance, in-kind donations, and memorial contributions.

2024-2025 Numbers

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

\$5,770

GIFTS IN EXCESS OF DUES:

\$17,520.00

GRANTS & OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS:

Includes but not limited to: Grants, Acquisition Fund, Speaker Honorarium Fund, and Digital Initiative Fund

\$145,705.70

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

\$6,510.00

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

\$175,505.70

YEAR IN REVIEW

SVHS Preservation Initiatives

2024-2025

PRESERVATION GRANT:

Sewickley United Methodist Church
\$5,000.00 for the repair and
repainting of masonry



2025 PRESERVATION

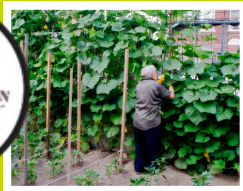
AWARD:

14 Beaver Road – The
Merenda House



2025 B.G. SHIELDS AWARD FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN PRESERVATION:

The Italian Gardens Project –
Mary Menniti



2025 PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITY:

Historic Setbacks



DIGITAL AND ORAL HISTORY FUND:

SVHS' Digital and Oral History Fund debuted in July 2023 as a restricted fund to be used to purchase items and services to assist in the digitization of items in the Collections at SVHS and creation of oral histories.

Digital & Oral History Initiative
Fund Raised since 2023:

\$74,512.89

Current balance minus
use of funds:

\$68,725.92

ACQUISITION FUND:

The Acquisition Fund at SVHS was seeded in August 2023 to enable staff to purchase items of importance to Sewickley Valley history as they become available. It gives SVHS an avenue to grow the collection and fill in gaps in donations.

Acquisition Fund
Raised since 2023:

\$3,100.00

Current balance minus
use of funds:

\$2,556.72

SPEAKER HONORARIUM FUND:

Established in 2024, this fund enables SVHS to attract a new and diverse slew of speakers for the SVHS lecture series. With this fund SVHS will be able offer speakers compensation for their time, expenses, --including possibly traveling to and staying in the area -- and their expertise.

Speaker Honorarium Fund
Raised since 2024:

\$8,250.00

TOTAL MEMBERS/DONORS: 300+

NEW MEMBERS: 20

SVHS Leadership for the upcoming year...

2025-2026 SVHS Board of Directors

President: Marty O'Brien
Secretary: Robin Bolea

Vice Pres.: George Berry, III
Treasurer: Sean Rollman

Alison Conte
Chris Driscoll

Rob Dunbar
Palmira Gerlach

Dana Merenda
James Mohn

Wayne Murphy
Shelley Murray

Jay West
Shelley Wygant

SVHS Committees

Archives

Architecture

Finance

Development

Ad Hoc Oral Histories

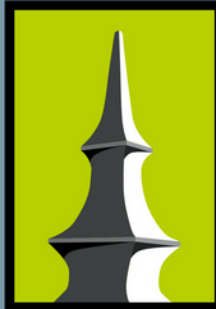
Membership

Program

All committees are looking for active and engaged members --
if you are interested in joining an SVHS committee, please reach out to the SVHS office

2025 - 2026 PROGRAM SCHEDULE *January*

2026



**SEWICKLEY
VALLEY**
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KEEP THIS SCHEDULE!

It is your programming schedule for the year! Registration for events and the most up-to-date info can be found on the SVHS website and its social media channels.

SVHS Open House

Saturday, January 24, 2026
Old Sewickley Post Office | 9am - 2pm



February

2026

Winter Tea

Saturday, February 7, 2026
Allegheny Country Club | 3pm - 5pm



"Lights, Camera, History!" No. 1

Thursday, February 26, 2026
The Lindsay Theater | 7 pm



September

2025

- Find SVHS at the Sewickley Harvest Festival on Sat. 9.6.25 - visit us and receive a magnet to hold this schedule to your fridge!

Special Event: "A Bite of History" Soda Fountain Edition

Thursday, September 25, 2025
Old Sewickley Post Office | 5:30 pm

- Lecture: "A Quest for Knowledge: 160 years of the Sewickley Query Club" By Sewickley Query Club

Thursday, September 25, 2025
Old Sewickley Post Office | 7 pm



March

2026

- Lecture: "A Colony Sprung from Hell: Pittsburgh during the American Revolution" By Dr. Daniel Barr

Thursday, March 5, 2026
Old Sewickley Post Office | 7 pm



- "Lights, Camera, History!" No. 2: 1776 (1972)

Thursday, March 26, 2026
The Lindsay Theater | 7 pm



April

2026

Antique Appraisal & Donation Day

Saturday, April 18, 2026
Old Sewickley Post Office | 9am - 1pm



- "Lights, Camera, History!" No. 3: Spirit of '76 (1990)

Thursday, April 30, 2026
The Lindsay Theater | 7 pm



October

2025

- Lecture: "Woven in Stone: The Legacy of Joseph Bittinger" by Rev. Derek Davenport

Thursday, October 16, 2025
Sewickley Presbyterian Church | 7 pm

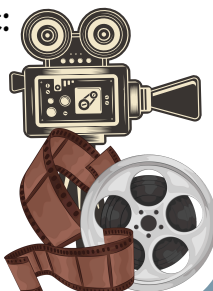


November

2025

- Lecture: "Processing the Past: Creating a Documentary that Preserves Their Story" 3rd Annual Joint Lecture of the Daniel B. Matthews & Sewickley Valley Historical Societies

Wednesday, November 5, 2025
Old Sewickley Post Office | 7 pm



May

2026

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 20, 2026
Old Sewickley Post Office | 7 pm



June

2026

Stay tuned for events and details as SVHS works with community partners to present programming in celebration of America's 250th Birthday!



Projected dates are May - August 2026!

WWW.SEWICKLEYHISTORY.ORG