



# THE MUSE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER of the LYNCHBURG MUSEUM SYSTEM

## Restoration of the Court House Nears Completion

After an intensive restoration project, the Advisory Board and staff are delighted to report that the Old Court House, the grand symbol of Lynchburg, will open again to the public in 2006 as home of The Lynchburg Museum System. The Old Court House has stood atop Monument Terrace since it was completed in 1855, some 150 years ago.

A crisis in 2000 started the process. On the morning of July 16th, a museum staff member alerted Tom Ledford that a crack had formed in the ceiling of the Gifford Gallery on the second floor. Tom arrived on the scene and found the crack widening, at which point he called in City building officials and they began to remove the artifacts. After the artifacts were removed, the ceiling suddenly fell in, damaging many exhibit cases—the gallery was essentially demolished but thankfully no one was injured and no artifacts damaged.

After inspection by restoration architects and engineers, it was found that seventeen concealed joists had been partially cut in 1976 to install plumbing and recessed lighting. The wood joists had been in place for 145 years at that point so some loss of strength had also occurred. A complete inspection of the building found that the cupola atop the dome also needed repair and there was a need for new systems and other building repairs. A contract was awarded to C. L. Lewis General Contractors in December, 2003, for an estimated cost of \$1.7 million. Funding came from historic tax credits and City Capital Improvement Plan monies.

Museum staff and City personnel moved the office equipment and thousands of artifacts from the Court House to the Lynchburg Business Development Center where they have

been stored during the restoration. The existing exhibits, reduced in size, were moved to Bragassa's Toy Store, space generously offered by the Lynchburg Historical Foundation, so that some exhibits would be accessible to the public for the duration of the construction.

As part of the restoration process, the Museum installed an automated fire suppression system, video surveillance, and security systems. The front steps were reinforced and the original exterior paint colors were applied. Reproductions of original court room furniture and lighting have been re-created and the original 1857 gas chandelier from the courtroom has been conserved and reinstalled.

Now that construction is completed, the next step is to finalize exhibit planning and raise the balance of the \$950,000 it will take to bring quality, engaging exhibits to Lynchburg's iconic building. One great feature is already in place—a window on the second floor provides a spectacular view down Monument Terrace and 9th Street to the site where it all began—Lynch's Ferry across the James River. For a full history of the Court House see the lead article in Spring/Summer issue of *Lynch's Ferry Magazine* and stay tuned for more information about the exciting rebirth of the Old Court House in 2006.



## Tom Ledford Retires

After 29 years as Lynchburg's first Administrator of the Museum System, Tom Ledford left that post for retirement on August 1. Hired in 1976 by the late Richard Gifford, Chairman of the Museum Advisory Board at a time when fervor for historic preservation began to emerge during the 1976 Bicentennial, Ledford fit the job like a hand in a glove.

Armed with a Master's in Anthropology and three years experience as Restoration Curator at the Historic St. Augustine, Florida Preservation Board, Ledford came to Lynchburg and found that except for area college art museums, no local history museums were extant. However, there were two buildings in the active process of historic renovation: Point of Honor and the Old Court House, which opened in 1977 and 1978 respectively. Both are now components of the Lynchburg Museum System.

Starting as the lone, seemingly indefatigable employee at the Museum, Ledford's staff grew to three full time and seven part-time employees. Despite the small staff, Tom and his co-workers have an impressive record of helping develop other local museum projects, not only as consultants, but also as hands-on helpers with their exhibits. Examples are:

- Lynchburg Historical Foundation
- Anne Spencer House
- Amazement Square
- Legacy Museum of African American History
- Old City Cemetery
- Kemper Street Station
- Historic Sandusky Foundation
- Civil War Trails
- Daura Gallery at Lynchburg College
- Center for History and Culture of Central Virginia
- Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest

Tom has maintained that the Museum has a strong need for an educator to make the collections credible for children and adults. "We must bring before the public the history of our place in Virginia and



Photos from Tom's retirement party held August 4, 2005 at Point of Honor.

the world. We can connect Lynchburg to the Atlantic cable, the Bonsack cigarette machine, cast iron components of the A-Bomb and nuclear fuel for the Navy." Tom's scope of interest extends beyond the local scene. He served on the Council of the Virginia Association of Museums for 12 years and was President from 1986-88. He is currently President of the Sphex Club of Lynchburg.

## Doug Harvey Hired as Museum Director

The City of Lynchburg's new Director of Museums, Douglas K. Harvey, began working in his new position on October 31. Harvey replaces long-time Museum Director Thomas Ledford, who retired earlier this year.

According to Libraries and Museum Director Lynn Dodge, Doug Harvey was an outstanding candidate and was chosen from among 32 other candidates. His background includes majors in history, English, education, and a degree in historic preservation. He also served an internship with the Smithsonian Institution and has certificates from the University of Texas Winedale Museum Program and the Summer Museum Management Institute, University of Colorado.

"Doug brings a wealth of experience to the job," said Dodge. "He began his professional career with the Manassas Museum System. As Director of Museum Services for the new American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond, he has been developing exhibits and programs to help visitors understand the Civil War from the perspectives from the South, North, and African-American experiences. He also appreciates the economic impact of tourism on the local economy."

## Accessions Committee Notes

Gifts of artifacts to the Museum are always welcome and are reviewed monthly by the Accessions Committee of Staff and Board members. The Committee examines each item to determine whether it is (1) authentic, (2) a significant historical addition to the collection and (3) whether it is a duplicate of an item already in the collection.

When a gift is accepted, the donor receives a letter of acknowledgment. The item is then accessioned and cataloged in the computerized data base. The Board is apprised of all Accession Committee proceedings. On rare occasions, the Committee may authorize purchase of an important historical artifact, such as a Lynchburg Civil War officer's sword. Such purchases are made from discretionary funds within the Lynchburg Museum Foundation. During the past two years the Committee reviewed more than 500 gifts to the Museum.

## Point of Honor Update

The graceful architecture and rich heritage of Point of Honor continues to draw out of town visitors and local citizens to its tours and programs. Day at the Point, held on October 15th, saw record numbers of visitors.

Upcoming additions to Point of Honor will include a new wallcovering in the foyer, new curtains installed in the parlor, and new scenic wallpaper made from the original hand blocks of Zuber et Cie in France for the dining room. A pedestrian bridge at the end of Cabell Street leading from Point of Honor to the trail along Blackwater Creek was opened in 2005. This bridge for hikers and bikers connects Point of Honor to Lynchburg's Historic Downtown District.

Point of Honor, built in 1815 by Dr. George Cabell, is one of Piedmont Virginia's finest examples of Federal architecture. By the 1960's, it had fallen into disrepair until it was rescued and restored by the Lynchburg Historical Foundation and Wachovia Bank, Trustee U/W Katherine Garland Diggs. Point of Honor opened to the public in 1977 and is managed by the Lynchburg Museum System.

HOURS: 10am-4pm daily.  
Closed Thanksgiving Day,  
Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day

ADMISSION: Adults \$6.00,  
Seniors (60+) \$5.00,  
Youth (ages 6-18) \$2.00,  
Children (under 6 with adults) free.  
Please contact us for tour group fees.

PHONE: 434-847-1459



*Although Point of Honor is a name which implies that the land on which it was built was a favorite Campbell County dueling spot, historical evidence hasn't confirmed that account.*

## New Museum Curator Welcomed

In April, 2005, the museum welcomed Curator Gregory R. Krueger. Greg is a native of Wisconsin and a graduate of the University of Wisconsin with an undergraduate degree in history and a master's degree in public history. Prior to coming to Lynchburg, Greg worked at The Museum of the Red River in Oklahoma and The Paine Art Center in Wisconsin. At the Paine Center, Greg oversaw collections and worked with a variety of exhibits ranging from musical

instruments to American art. He also helped preserve and interpret the Paine's Tudor Revival mansion and was involved in a major horticulture project with seven gardens on site.

Earlier, Greg worked with the Milwaukee Public Museum in conservation of artifacts, art education, and computerized museum collections. His diversity of talent and skills combined with his outgoing personality make him a great addition to the museum system team.

### *From the Chairman's Desk*

## Museum Foundation Seeks \$950,000 to Construct Exhibits in New Galleries

When the Court House reopens in 2006, exhibition gallery space will be greatly enhanced. Lynchburg residents take pride in telling their story, but quality exhibits entail significant investment. The estimated cost of bringing the Court House back to life as a museum is \$950,000—the Museum has raised \$360,000 to date leaving approximately \$600,000 to be raised. The Museum has many artifacts in storage, some of which have not been seen due to lack of space. There is now an opportunity to present them in a first class exhibit space. Future exhibits may include Lynchburg aviation, sports and recreation, silver and decorative arts, history of the fire department, public works history, and fine arts. To get the most out of our museum as a place to attract tourism, preserve the community's treasures and memories, and educate students and people of all ages, we need funding for quality exhibits.

The Lynchburg Museum seeks your support with tax-deductible gifts. The short term goal is to fund exhibits and the long term goal is to build our endowment so that the interest from it can finance future exhibits and programs. Please help us for the people of Lynchburg today and those of tomorrow.

—RDG



## About the Museum

The Lynchburg Museum is in the cornerstone of historic downtown Lynchburg. It houses exhibits documenting the City's history from prehistoric people to current events. The Museum is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation founded in 1976 by the City of Lynchburg. This Mission Statement was endorsed by the Board in March, 1992: "The Museum System preserves, increases, and disseminates knowledge about the history of Lynchburg, Virginia, its inhabitants, and its relations to Virginia and the nation.

The Museum System accomplishes its purpose by collecting and preserving objects and reminiscences which are evident of Lynchburg's past; by interpreting this evidence to the public at the Lynchburg Museum (Old Court House), Point of Honor, and other sites, and by stimulating intellectual inquiries on topics related to the city's history."

Due to the current restoration project, the Old Court House is temporarily closed but expected to re-open in 2006. Meanwhile, museum exhibits may be seen at Bragassa's Toy Store at 12<sup>th</sup> and Court Streets, placed there temporarily in cooperation with the Lynchburg Historical Foundation.

HOURS: 10 AM-4 PM Daily  
(Closed on major holidays)



## A View from the Top of the Steps

As we anxiously await the completion of the renovation and reopening of the Lynchburg Museum at the top of Monument Terrace, museum staff continue the operation of the facilities graciously offered by the Lynchburg Historical Foundation.

In addition, the staff's preservation and care for our large collection of historic artifacts ensures the outstanding quality of local history exhibits when the Court House is reopened with its enhanced exhibit space.

Community support, always a necessary component of museum operation, is particularly critical during this reconstruction period when public viewing of the collection is curtailed by space limitations.

As the tourism industry increases in the Lynchburg economy, it is important that the Museum System is poised to expand its efforts both in operation of an enlarged modern museum and in providing leadership to numerous historical projects in the community. To that end, the assistance and support of all the people of Lynchburg interested in preserving our past is needed more than ever. The Lynchburg Museum Foundation seeks your generous financial support.

—James K. Swisher, Past Board Chairman

Lynchburg Museum System  
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### *the muse news*

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*Museum Advisory Board:* Dr. Robert D. Gardner, Chairman; Darlene B. Barrett; Col. William L. Burnham (Ret.); Laura Crumbley; Lynn Dodge (Ex-Officio); Eleanor T. Dovel; Dabney Jackson, (Volunteer); Laura Munson; W. Randolph Nexsen; Marc A. Schewel; W. Scott Smith; Jewell E. Stooker; Elaine Watson; Jenny L. West

*Museum Administrative Staff:* Doug Harvey, Museum Director; Greg Krueger, Curator of Collections; Ann Scalf, Office Manager

### *Museum newsletter launched*

This issue of *The Muse News* initiates a new publication about the activities of the Lynchburg Museum System. The newsletter will be distributed quarterly free of charge. Letters to the Editor are welcomed and may be published in future issues; we ask that they be signed with the writer's name, address, and telephone number.