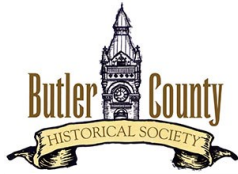


Butler County Historical Society

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Butler County *Historian*

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Echoes From Our Past *2023 Cemetery Walk*



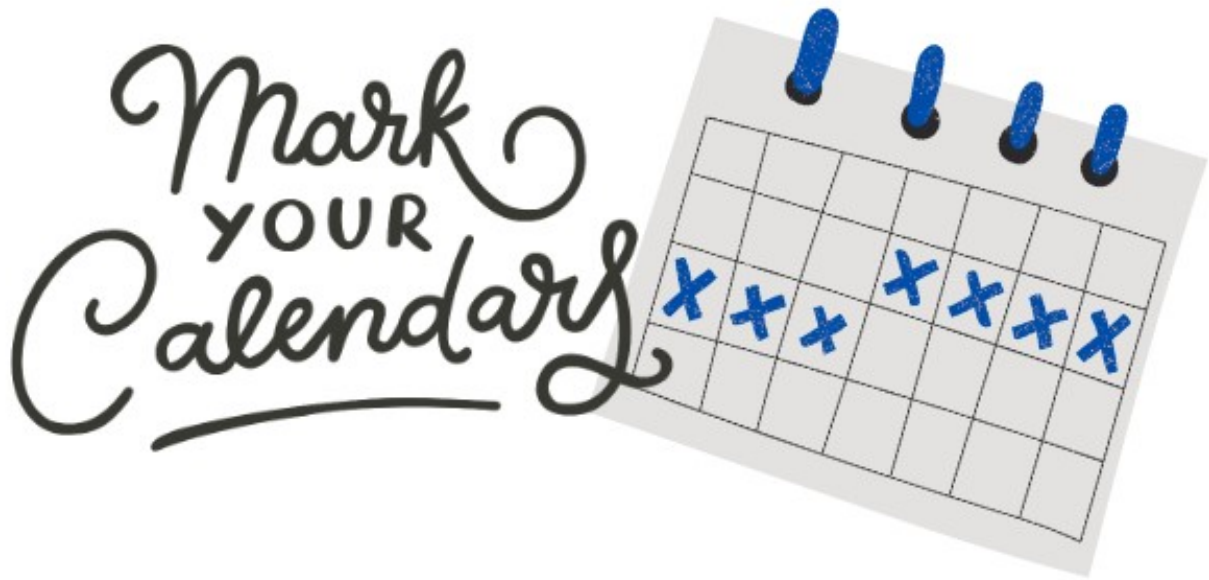
Saturday, September 16, 2023

North Side Cemetery ~ Tours at 11 AM and 2:30 PM.

Tickets purchased for the May event will be honored!

New tickets for September are available at 724-283-8116

or online at butlerhistory.com/shop



The 2024 BCHS Calendar is available to preorder!

Our 16th annual calendar, *Through the Years*, will soon head to the printer. They're still only \$10, and you can **preorder** your copy by calling BCHS at 724-283-8116.

After October 18th, you can buy a copy of *Through the Years* during office hours at the Senator Walter Lowrie House, the local businesses listed at right, or butlerhistory.com/shop.

Many Thanks to our 2024 Calendar Sponsors:

The Housing & Redevelopment Authority of Butler Co.

The Law Offices of Gail E. Suhr, PLLC

Purchase Your 2024 Calendar At:

Cummings Candy & Coffee

146 N. Main Street

May's Music Shoppe

247 E. Jefferson Street

Natili North

204 N. Main Street

Please support these local businesses!

Was the Penn Theater your go-to movie spot?



Slippery Rock University is looking for people to share their memories of the Penn Theater! SRU students will be interviewing folks for an oral history project and possible publication.

If you're interested in sharing your memories, contact SRU at penntheaterproject@gmail.com or by calling 724-738-2043

Inside The Archives

~ The Exercise Man ~

- Mackenzie Herold

The Butler County Historical Society remembers the fascinating life of Paul Gaudino (1935-2022).

Gaudino's family recently donated a collection of objects detailing his life and career.

If Butler is your hometown, you might be familiar with the name Paul Gaudino. If not the name, perhaps you remember his TV program, his vibrant jump suits, or his boundless energy. Perhaps you, like so many others, knew him by his stage name, “The Exercise Man.”



You would never have guessed by watching his show, but Paul Gaudino was a very shy child. Like many of us, he struggled with insecurities and low self-esteem. But Paul never let those insecurities get the best of him. At the age of fourteen, Paul began exercising at the YMCA. It was the beginning of a long career dedicated to physical fitness and helping others.

“I had nothing going for me. I wasn’t real intelligent, so I decided to build my body. And while I was doing that, I was building my self-esteem, too.” (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, October 23, 2005*).

The youngest of nine children, Paul was born February 18, 1935 to Francesco and Luigia Gaudino, His father operated a shoe repair store in town and expected his sons to follow in his footsteps. But in 1945 the family’s life was turned upside down when Francesco passed away at age fifty-three. Paul was only ten at the time, and his father’s death impacted the course of his life. According to an article in *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, “Gaudino had difficulty accepting the fact that it was normal for people in their 50s to become seriously ill...he vowed to learn all he could about fitness and do whatever he could to help others.”



During his late teens and early twenties, Paul became passionate about bodybuilding. He won numerous weightlifting and bodybuilding contests, was voted Mr. Butler, and finished seventh in the Mr. Pennsylvania body-building competition. However, increased use of steroids among bodybuilding contestants soured Paul on the sport and he absolutely refused to take performance-enhancing drugs.

From 1957 to 1959, during his time in the U.S. Army, Paul began teaching exercise programs. In an interview on Armstrong’s *Faces & Places*, Paul described how he would continue working out after his unit’s daily fitness training. His superior officers took notice, and asked Paul to lead his battery in physical fitness training as well as an “after hours” class focused on weightlifting.

While serving overseas, Paul met his future wife, Barbara, a native of East Germany who had managed to escape into the West. Despite a considerable language barrier (Barbara only knew German and Paul only knew English), the couple persevered and were married within two years of their first meeting.



Inside the Archives, cont'd



Back in the States, Paul returned to work at Yost's Shoe Store in Butler. For years, he would teach exercise classes at the YMCA. These classes would soon inspire Paul to start the next leg of his journey. In 1971, *The Paul Gaudino Family Fitness Show* would air to the Butler community and surrounding areas. Barbara directed the show, and the couple struggled to make ends meet in the program's early years. With five children to feed, Gaudino continued to work as a shoe repairman and Barbara took several different part-time jobs. Despite their financial hardships, the family always gave Paul their wholehearted support. "Paul has worked very hard to bring his message across to anyone who will listen," Barbara said in an interview with the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*.

"Our family has always encouraged him to keep telling his audiences how important it is for everyone to make exercise a habit. And naturally, he doesn't let us forget it."

For forty-four years, *The Paul Gaudino Family Fitness Show* made exercise accessible for anyone who tuned in. Whether his viewers were two or ninety-two, Gaudino created exercise routines that were easy for everyone to follow. He also created exercises specifically for people who were wheelchair-bound. These specialized exercise programs brought him national fame, and calls came in from nursing homes across the country asking for assistance tailoring exercise programs for wheelchair-bound residents. Paul continually received letters from viewers telling him about their fitness journeys and how his show helped them.

What good is [your body] if you can't use it? This was the message at the core of Paul's show. Paul was a firm believer in physical fitness as the key to mental and spiritual health. Dr. Bernard Cohen, a medical advisor for Paul's show, told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* that the program not only played an important role in the good physical health of his viewers, but also had tremendous benefits for their mental health.



In 2002 *The Paul Gaudino Family Fitness Show* entered the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the longest-running family fitness show, and Paul didn't retire until 2015 at the age of eighty! Even after his "retirement" Paul continued to stay busy! During the COVID-19 lockdown, Paul hosted live-stream exercise programs from his home in Florida. After a lifetime of inspiring generations of people to get active, Paul Gaudino passed away in 2022 at the age of eighty-seven.

In an interview with the *Butler Eagle*, his daughter Debbie, described her father as a moral and generous man. "He touched a lot of people," she said. "He was so one of a kind."





The annual Christmas Cookie Walk is fast approaching, and we need **YOUR HELP!**

Our goal is to have 300 dozen cookies for everyone to enjoy, but we can't make that without your support! You can make & freeze cookies now, bring them over fresh out of the oven on December 2nd, or anything in between!

**Get out your favorite recipe, then
call 724-283-8116 to volunteer!!**

Message from the President

2022-2023

Board of Directors

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Vice-President

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Jennifer Ford, PhD
**Executive
Director**

Mackenzie Herold
Outreach Coordinator

For a little change of pace, I'm going to commandeer the Director's Message page while Jen Ford is out for a few weeks. My name is Joyce Rauschenberger, and I'm currently President of the Historical Society's Board of Directors. I've been involved with many community service organizations, including the City of Butler Tree Commission, Masonic-sponsored youth organizations, school associations, and the Butler County Genealogical Society.

The important news I have to share with you concerns the extraordinarily generous bequest BCHS recently received from the estate of C. Timothy Shaffer. Mr. Shaffer made significant bequests to several nonprofit organizations, and we count ourselves fortunate to have been among those.

As members, you deserve to know what our plans are for this unexpected windfall. We have established a committee tasked with investigating then recommending strategies to the Board of Directors. The Board will review, edit, and ultimately vote on a financial plan. However, we do have a basic framework already in place.

We will invest most of the funds in long-term growth instruments with the goal of creating a financial safety net for BCHS.

We will invest in the repair and maintenance of all three historic sites in our care: the Lowrie House, Cooper Cabin, and the Little Red Schoolhouse. Each of those properties needs repairs that are always just out of our financial reach.

Now, thanks to Mr. Shaffer, we can address those concerns in 2024!

We will finish securing and cataloging our object, document, and image collections.

Beyond those pressing needs, **our yearly operating expenses—insurance, utilities, maintenance, salaries and so on—will remain much the same** and depend heavily on memberships and fundraising!! In other words, **we will still need your support to carry on day-to-day operations, events, and programs!**

Meanwhile, fun projects and events are underway! The *Echoes from Our Past* cemetery walk is only a week away and our annual Christmas Cookie Walk is fast approaching. We have partnered with the General Richard Butler Chapter of the DAR to create new exhibits at the Little Red School House, and we're busy planning new events, exhibits, talks, and tours at the Senator Walter Lowrie House.

Thank you all for your continued support; we hope you will continue making Butler County Historical Society events part of your social calendar! Butler County has so much to offer and so much to learn about!

-Joyce Rauschenberger



Office/Tour Hours

The BCHS Office and Research Library at the Senator Walter Lowrie House (123 W. Diamond Street) are open to the public Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. or by appointment.

Membership Updates

If your name is highlighted on the address label, it's time to renew your membership! Please renew online at butlerhistory.com or by sending a check to our office with your renewal information.

THANK YOU SO MUCH for your continued support. Every membership is important; each one enables us to preserve Butler County's past for future generations!

And a warm welcome to our newest member:

Linda Cottage

Our Mission

*The Mission of the
Butler County
Historical Society is to
collect, preserve,
maintain, and interpret
the historical
documents and sites of
Butler County's rich
history.*

Butler County Historical Society

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