

## THE GOOD PURPOSE PAGEANT

By Lydia Greenberg

In looking through our library, we uncovered a souvenir program from the 165th anniversary celebration of Fort Allen. This celebration was held August 24-26, 1939 at Walthour's Field, near what is now Hempfield High School. The 36-page souvenir program includes a commemoration, a brief history of the good purpose land, dozens of sponsors from local businesses, and – most importantly – a synopsis of the pageant that was performed every night of the celebration.

The pageant opens with a dreamy ballet interpretation of the biblical beginning of the universe. Dancers are reported to have started motionless, then burst into chaotic, disjointed movement. Over the course of the number, the dancers began to find synchrony and order.

Subsequent scenes present vignettes of Hempfield Township throughout history – the French and Indian War, the Battle of Bushy Run, the founding of Good Purpose, the first church service at Zion Lutheran, the building of Fort Allen, the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and Industrial Revolution.

The tenth and final scene “[depicts] America as she really exists today – A Democracy under whose flag all nationalities and all creeds can find peace and contentment, freedom of speech and worship. The customs of many nations are here depicted. They all find expression here in Westmoreland, a modern American melting pot.”

A second program was included, slid between the pages of the 1939 booklet. This one doesn't specify a year, but it does show that the pageant had, at some point, expanded into 14 scenes – some containing subscenes – with a prologue and a grand finale.

Do you remember this pageant? Do you have relatives who acted in the pageant throughout the years? Stop by our library to share your memories or find out more!



## THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS!

If you are interested in becoming a corporate sponsor, please visit our website for full information.

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## MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

By Franny Petras

We're reaching out to the community to learn what programs and events you would be interested in seeing. Do you have a favorite local speaker you would be interesting in having us host? What days of the weeks work best for your schedule? Would you prefer mornings or evenings?

To suggest topics or times, please reach out to us on our Facebook page or via email at [info@BaltzerMeyer.com](mailto:info@BaltzerMeyer.com)!

## “GRILL” YOUR FAMILY THIS SUMMER!

By Lydia Greenberg

Memorial Day beckons in the season of backyard barbecues and family picnics. It's time to break out the ketchup (Heinz of course) and fire up the grills - but burgers and hot dogs aren't the only thing you should be grilling this year!

That's right, I'm challenging you to grill your family. Sit down with your grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins multiple-times-removed and get them talking. Ask them about their life experiences. How much did their first job pay? How did their childhood differ from yours? Where were they when the Challenger tragedy happened? What about Y2K?

So much of our domestic history gets lost when our matriarchs and patriarchs pass. We don't realize how much we miss their stories until it's too late. I wish I would have recorded my grandmother's stories - I'd give anything to hear her talk about how she'd walk to downtown Jeannette to windowshop and catch a movie at one of the multiple theatres. Even the funny, personal anecdotes (like the one where she was coming home at night and petted a skunk, instead of her outdoor cat) are a vital part of family history.

So this summer, do yourself and your future generations a favor. Ask questions, listen, record, share, and celebrate. And of course, we wouldn't mind if you sent a couple stories our way.

## GENEALOGY LIBRARY HOURS

The 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month are the only days Lori is scheduled to be on site 10am-2pm. Please email [LMyers@BaltzerMeyer.com](mailto:LMyers@BaltzerMeyer.com) to schedule research.

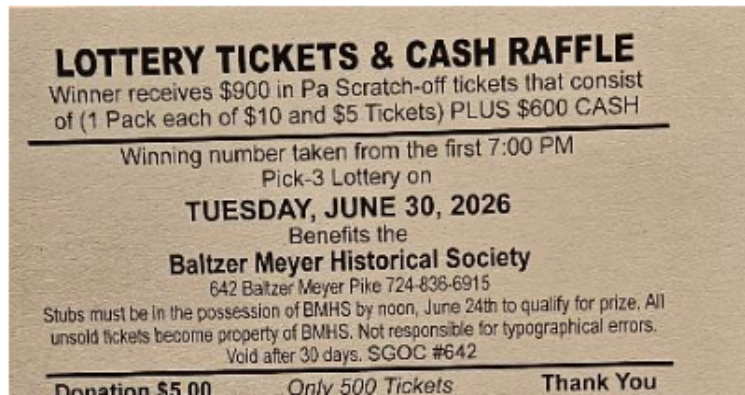
Wednesdays 6pm-8pm  
Thursdays 10am-2pm

# RAFFLE TICKETS

By Becky Plischke

We are selling raffle tickets. The winner receives \$900 in PA Scratch-off tickets, 1 pack each of \$10 and \$5 tickets, PLUS \$600 in cash! The winning number will be taken from the first 7:00 Pick-3 Lottery drawing on Tuesday, June 30, 2026. You can purchase tickets at our events or from any of our Board

Members. Stop by whenever the Historical Society is open to buy some tickets. They will also be available at the Greensburg Newsstand, Penelope's, For The Love of Furbabies. Support Baltzer Meyer Historical Society and hopefully, win these prizes. Good Luck!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

June 7 th 2026 Sunday 1-3 PM

Ron Maxson will speak on the Marines participation in the Pacific Theater

June 13th - 14th Saturday and Sunday 11-6 PM

Come visit us at Bullskin Township Heritage Days

June 20th 2026 Saturday 1-3 PM

Ronel Baccus will speak on Juneteenth

## YOUR TRASH IS OUR TREASURE

By Becky Plischke

Recently while doing some cleaning up, I came across a few old yearbooks that belonged to family members who had passed away. What should be done with them? Of course, Baltzer Meyer Historical Society would be a great home for these. Others researching family would find them valuable.

What else could they use? Some old toys, great uncle's tools, a military uniform, some elementary school photos, many things you have and don't really want anymore would find a home at Baltzer Meyer Historical Society. Your donations would be available to the community and benefit everyone who comes to visit.

# NEWSLETTERS THROUGH THE DECADES: 2002

## OLD NAMES FOR CAUSES OF DEATH

Original Article by Lori Myers, Foreword by Lydia Greenberg

Kicked the bucket, passed away, went off to the great beyond, departed, shuffled off this mortal coil, died. The living have always had so many terms for death and dying – some meant to soften the blow, others to cruelly twist the knife. Others still were created out of medical necessity. *HOW* did my loved one die? *WHAT* caused them to die? If we put a name to the horrors, we become less afraid; less traumatized by the mere mention of them. My loved one did not drop dead from some unknown, unnamed cause, nor did my loved one die gruesomely from a lack of blood to the brain. My loved one simply died from apoplexy. Take a walk with me through this article from 2002, written by my mother. Let's have her explain what some of the more archaic medical terms in your family history mean:

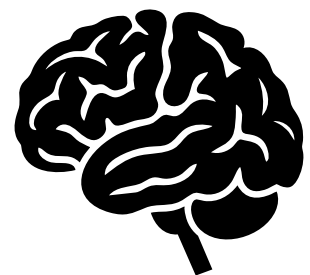
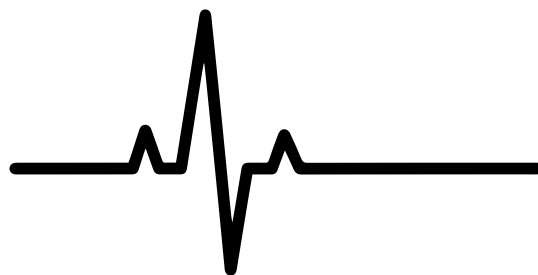
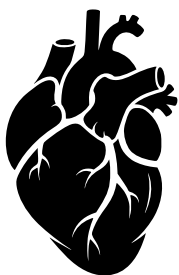
"Have you ever wondered what some of the diseases and causes of death in the old records are in today's standards? Well, I have done some internet exploring and there are several sites that deal with archaic medical terminology.

Almost everyone knows that **APOPLEXY** was a stroke, but did you know that if you put an organ name in front of it, that is a hemorrhage or failure of blood supply to that organ. It could also mean any sudden, rapidly fatal disease.

Do you know what **BRIGHT'S DISEASE** was? It is a term no longer used today that was a catchall phrase for kidney diseases and disorders. If it was severe, it was known as **NEPHRITIS**, which was kidney inflammation.

Pregnant women had a lot to worry about. **MILK LEG** was a common occurrence after childbirth, where one or both legs swelled up due to blood clots (thrombosis). It was called Milk Leg because they mistakenly thought the excess milk went to the leg. It could be fatal. They could also come down with **CHILD BED FEVER**, a post-delivery infection that was also very dangerous to the mother's health. Death from childbirth was usually labeled as **PUERPERAL EXHAUSTION** or **PUERPERAL FEVER**, which was an infection after childbirth due to poor midwifery techniques, especially during antiseptic measures. The infection entered through injuries to the birth canal, leading to septicemia and often death that occurred within three weeks of childbirth.

**DROPSY?** That was edema of the heart or kidneys. It could also be heart failure. **CANINE MADNESS** was simply rabies. We all know that Abraham Lincoln's mother died from **MILK SICKNESS** after their cow had eaten some white snakeroot plant. **PYTHISIS (PHTHISIS)** was a chronic wasting illness, or it could be tuberculosis."



WANT TO SEE MORE?

Check out Baltzer Meyer Historical Society's website for upcoming events and exciting updates!

[www.BaltzerMeyer.com](http://www.BaltzerMeyer.com)