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Calendar

June 3

GPS Picnic

At the end of Kimball Road.

<http://www.galwaypreservationsociety.org>

JuneGPS Update

From Virginia Sawicki and Bonnie Donnan

Table of Contents

Page One

June GPS Update

Page Two

Response to Tom Cwiakala's article. By Alan Maddaus

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Welcome back to our summer residents.

Our May meeting opened with a moment of silence to honor the passing of our member and former treasurer Ann David.

The annual election of officers and trustees was held. Bonnie Donnan was elected president, Virginia Sawicki vice president, Martha Brandow secretary, and Marjorie Hall trustee. Thanks to Tom Cwiakala for his service on the Board of Trustees.

We thank the Suprenants for opening their home, the Stimson House, to us for our program. A historical marker was unveiled and dedicated by Phyllis Keeler, Galway Town Historian, in front of the house. Craig Suprenant's history of his home and an exhibit of artifacts, newspaper clippings, and documents as well as a tour were enjoyed at this well attended meeting.

The annual member's picnic will be hosted by Dusty and Arlene Rhodes at their home June 3rd at 6 p.m. If you didn't sign up at the May meeting for what goodies you are bringing to the picnic you may hear from Sue Surdyka or Margie Hall.

We will be having our auction at the picnic. Members are invited to bring one

item, historical or Galway relevancy a plus, to donate. Items will be tagged with a number and will be available for preview before the sale. The auction will have a time limit, so all of the items may not be sold.

The Gazebo decorating committee has braved the weather and fit in the application of patriotic bunting in between the storms. The Gazebo in the Village Park is now ready for Memorial Day and the festivities .

Check out the exhibit in the lobby of Town Hall if you haven't already seen it. People have shared heirlooms and treasured items from their families. Remember, an heirloom can be a story as well as an item. If you are inspired by the display to share a story about an item in your family that reminds you of a relative, a family event, or the origins of your family, please write it up to share in this newsletter. If you are concerned about the quality of your prose Evelyn Hanna has volunteered to help you out.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be July 24th, 7 p.m. at Town Hall. As always, all members are welcome.

The next regular membership meeting will be September 9th, the week after Labor Day. Have a good summer.



Crystal Set Radio



East St. Home, 1950

I read Tom Cwiakala's recent article in the April issue of the GPS journal with interest and enjoyment. It brought back pleasant memories of Galway at the somewhat later era of the 1950s and 60s. My family moved to Galway in the summer of 1950 and lived for 17 years in the house on East St. between the Baptist and Catholic churches. Our move from Schenectady, where my father taught mathematics at Union College, was preceded by that of Union Professors Schwarz and Weeks, and their wives.

My introduction to the crystal set radio came in the form of a Christmas present. I'm not sure I understood the technology, but quickly learned how to operate it, moving the "cat's whisker" probe over the galena crystal surface to find a strong signal. Now, with the internet, all you need to do is google "crystal set radio" and more information will be supplied than you can possibly use. My father helped me install an antenna of stranded copper wire from my bedroom window to a locust tree about 100 feet away in the backyard, and we used a metal vent pipe that ran from the basement to the roof, through my room, as a ground. During thunderstorms I would connect the antenna directly to the ground. In retrospect, I'm not sure that was a good idea as it potentially brought the electricity from a lightning bolt into the house, but perhaps the antenna would have melted from the initial current surge before that happened. Like Tom I enjoyed programs such as the Lone Ranger, and gradually upgraded my radio equipment from crystal set to single tube, then one tube and rectifier and finally a multi-tube set, all built from kits purchased at a Radio and TV repair shop owned by a Mr. Charles Morris, I believe, and located next to Hunter's store diagonally across from McChesney's Feed and Hardware. By that time the Galway Building Supply store had ceased operations. I remember Mr. Morris as a pleasant man who smoked a pipe and allowed me to visit to watch him diagnose and repair problems with customer TV sets.



Brooklyn Dodgers, 1955 World Champions



#42 Jackie Robinson

In the mid-1950s television sets were pretty common in Galway homes, ours being an exception as my father, who had some very specific ideas related to education of his sons, felt that television would be a distraction from doing homework. His resolve weakened and his position started to erode when his beloved Brooklyn Dodgers made it to the 1955 World Series. Since we didn't have a TV set to watch the Dodgers' heroic victory over the Yankees he was forced to accept an invitation from a kindly neighbor, Harry Robinson, owner of an apartment house across the street, to watch on his set. My mother recalls that later that year Grandpa gave her money to spend on Christmas presents for my brothers and I. She bought a used TV, mainly because she was afraid that we all were spending too much time at the neighbors watching their TV and perhaps bothering them. So, next year, due in large part to some complicated family dynamics, we had a TV and my father could watch the World Series in the comfort of his living room. And of course, the Dodgers lost (but in heroic fashion). Interestingly, Jackie Robinson was a member of the 1955 and 1956 teams, and now, 60 years later, is the subject of a movie, "42", (his number) related to his role in breaking the major league baseball color line, the barrier that prohibited African-Americans from playing in the major leagues. He was, as I recall, an outstanding second baseman and a man of remarkable character and emotional strength.



Chuck's Flavorland, 1963



McChesney's Feed Store, 1963

In contrast to Tom's recollections of the 1940s the organized entertainment opportunities in Galway Village during the 1950s and early 1960s seem limited. An occasional concert and dances at the high school, as well as basketball, soccer and baseball games with other schools. No movies that I can remember. But we did have Chuck's Flavorland as a comfortable place to hangout with good food, a jukebox and a pool table. Forty cents was sufficient to buy lunch, consisting of a hot dog, french fries and a coke. I remember Chuck Quinlan, the proprietor, as a hardworking, good-natured, community spirited individual who insisted on reasonable behavior on the part of teenagers visiting his establishment and was an excellent role model. I understand that now, more than 50 years later, Chuck is still actively engaged in running the business. Not surprising, from my perspective.

During the summer months there were softball games in the village park, which seems somehow smaller now than during the period when I lived there. Home plate was in close proximity to the flagpole, still standing, I believe. The outfield was bounded by a roughly semi-circular McChesney Feedstore driveway with a storage barn in left field and trees at center and to the right forming a barrier to lengthy flyballs. Occasionally a ball broke a window in one of the Feedstore buildings, but the McChesney brothers who ran the business took it in stride. Boys and girls of all ages were involved and it was a significant social event. An inscription in my 1960 Galway yearbook, written by one of

the McChesney daughters at the time of her graduation, laments the end of softball games in the park for her, as she anticipated joining the work force.



Bill Haley and the Comets



Elvis Presley



Boom Boom Branigan

And it was the dawn of the Rock n' Roll. The era seemed to start abruptly with Bill Haley and The Comets "Rock Around the Clock". Then Elvis burst on the scene and the Music, played continuously by AM radio stations like WPTR and WTRY became a major part of youthful entertainment. Disk Jockeys like "Boom Boom Branigan" of WPTR became instant celebrities by association with the performers whose records they played, although to his credit, his enthusiastic delivery of information related to the Music world added entertainment value. My radio sets were all equipped with earphones so that I could avoid annoying my parents with loud music. The fact that at present my hearing is still close to normal (my wife claims it isn't) is miraculous as with the volume all the way up and earphones in place the effect could truly be described as deafening. To compound the problem I frequently listened until late at night, occasionally falling asleep with the radio and earphones on, waking the next morning with the music blasting in my ears and a headache, throbbing in 4/4 time to the music. I'm not sure if "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger" applies here, but as Tom said in his article "Those were the days...."

Alan Maddaus, April 16, 2013