

Point Pleasant Historical Society

History Term Paper



Box 1273, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ

November 2024

Please join us on November 4, 2024 at 7:30 PM for our November Meeting at the Point Pleasant Borough Municipal Building; 2233 Bridge Ave, Point Pleasant Borough, NJ. Historian, William Schmidt, will present the "Hindenburg Experience"; a riveting 45-minute presentation of the ship's history including the final transatlantic trip and tragic fire at Lakehurst, NJ on May 6, 1937. The meeting is open to the public and you need not be a member to attend. Light refreshments will be provided.



Our Ocean County Leader Newspaper!

The first issue of the Ocean County Leader was published 108 years ago this spring, a 12-page, six column premier. The Leader quickly became a valued local institution. Unfortunately, virtually all back copies prior to 1937 are lost. But we do know what was in the very first edition. In 1940 the paper published the following summary:

"Wake up Rip!" was the caption of a cartoon drawn by Albert Bennett for the first publication of the Ocean County Leader which was printed March 17, 1916.

The cartoon showed Rip Van Winkle peacefully sleeping under a tree with a tag fastened to his long white beard reading, "Lakewood-Point Pleasant Traction Company."

It was at this time that negotiations were underway to extend the trolley system from Point Pleasant to Lakewood and the plan failed after a greater portion of the roadbed for the trolley lines were laid.

An account of the death of Albert Allen, Justice of the Peace of the Borough, was also recorded in this issue, as was an article on the election of J. Edward Harvey, who was elected a member of the Point Pleasant Beach Board of the Education.

Charles Osborn, popular dog fancier back in 1916, fell foul of the law and was arrested for allowing his dogs to run at large, according to a story appearing on the front page. He was tried before Justice of the Peace Charles V. Hance and was fined \$40.00.

Raymond E. Ridsen leased the Maple Grove hotel through A.O.S. Hance real estate agency during that month of March, coming from Butler, NJ. Mrs. Luella Arnold, assistant superintendent of streets, reprimanded a junk dealer from Asbury Park for overloading his truck with junk. The driver was made to lighten the load and he did so by unloading about a half of ton of junk here.

The Point Pleasant High School students contributed a column to the Leader called The School Tattler, and Rosalie Moore was editor, Helen Furman, LeRoy Jones, Fannie Abromowitz, Fred Makin and Margaret Carrigan were reporters.

The Point Pleasant High School baseball schedule appeared in this initial issue, which showed that the Pointers were to play Asbury Park, Long Branch, Freehold, Atlantic Highlands, Leonardo, Neptune and Red Bank. Point Pleasant played Long Branch on the opening date, which was April 15.

Many personals appeared in the March 17 issue, which was edited by Elbert Rose. Elwood C. Jones was treasurer of the Point Pleasant Printing and Publishing Company at the time.

One of the larger advertisements appearing on this date was that of the Lakewood and Coast Electric Company which told why people should wire their houses for electricity.

Brick Township elected three trustees to their school board and Charles V. Hance, C.C. Burdge and C. Albert Fleming were winners.

Our town fathers, then headed by Mayor Thomas Graham, Sr., held a meeting and a lovely time was encountered when it was suggested that water meters be installed in the town.

Height and Lawrence told of their choice meats and poultry, and F & W.H. Makin, the home bakers, told The Leader readers about their homemade pies and cakes.

Joe Vetrini was in the vegetable business and so told the public through his advertisement, and the Ocean County Coal company had an advertisement on page four which told of the best anthracite that could be purchased there.

1916 Headlines

**Local Trolley Service will
resume May 25**

**Carollton Hotel to Open
May 27**

**Capt. Benjamin B. Pearce
Dead**

**Richard Harding Davis
Succumbs; Sidney**

Weber Dies in New York

**Six Hundred Children
Arrive at St. Vincent's
Retreat Here**

**T. Wardell and Lydia A.
Johnson Wed**

**Tramp in Drunken Brawl
Murders Pal**

**Borough council Wants
Sidewalks**

**Russell Mickle Lands 20
Pound Bass**



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The Leader

THE 82 YEAR LIFE OF A HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Eighty-four years ago, on October 4, 1940 the Ocean County Leader began a nearly four-decade era of influence and at least physical, if not fiscal, stability as it moved into its new headquarters on the south east corner of Bay and Laurel Avenues. It was a move trumpeted with a front-page banner headline. The lead story proudly told readers the property on which the new building was constructed was once owned by famed Hearst newspaper editor Arthur Brisbane and proclaimed in the first paragraph that the move was to the paper's "fourth and final home." Although it stayed at that location for nearly 40 years, there have been three additional moves since and a lot of ups and downs, as is normal in the newspaper business.

The first newspaper published in the Point Pleasant area was *The Beacon*, begun in 1883 by David Leaw. Occupying a building on Arnold Avenue at the intersection of River Avenue, it was a four-page publication "read by everybody," by one account. The Havens Brothers, Roy and Fred, purchased the business from Leaw and moved the plant to what was known as Railroad Square, an area near the train station.

The Leader was established in 1916 by Joseph M. Moran, president of the Atlantic Basin Iron Works, Brooklyn, owner of the Jersey City baseball club of the International League, and the producer of the musical show Irene. Moran owned a summer home along the upper Manasquan River. Harry Kroh became Editor.

The Leader's first home was on the second floor of the Wheeler building at Bay and Arnold Avenues, a building that still stands today as Stella y Luna. In 1917 *the Leader* moved to a building next to the Ocean County National Bank and Moran purchased *The Beacon*, merging the two papers.

After Moran's sudden death in New York the paper was purchased by E. S. Poke; and in 1931 L. P. Artman, owner and publisher of the *Key West Citizen*, bought it and moved to the Ridsen Building on Bay Avenue. Elmer Errickson was a notable editor of the time and an enthusiastic local booster. He used the name "Eric" to write columns about everyday life in the Point Pleasant area. During World War II he encouraged servicemen and women overseas to send him letters on their exploits and thoughts for publication. Errickson kept a detailed series of scrap books on all the local boys and girls serving in the military, a valuable work of love and respect. The Point Pleasant Historical Society now has these scrapbooks on display at its museum. In 1947 local ownership came to *the Leader* as the prominent physician Bruce Henriksen bought a controlling interest with the help of other area luminaries - Arthur Johnson, owner of Point Pleasant Hardware; Dr. C. Norman Witte; Joseph Clayton, for whom Clayton Field was named; and Orlo Jenkinson, founder of Jenkinson's Pavilion.

"The little paper wasn't doing very well, and we thought we could shore it up and keep an avenue for local news and notices," Henriksen said. The investors accomplished this at some cost to themselves, but managed to keep an institution going that was valuable in promoting the community in which they were pillars of the establishment. One of the first editorials under the new management urged residents to patronize their local merchants.

After the *Jersey Journal* in Jersey City failed, several of its staff members came to work for *the Leader*. One of them was Victor Shanahan who managed it for a while and then bought it in 1956. With a professional newspaperman in charge and with the help of a booming postwar shore economy, *the Leader* became thick and prosperous. But others, notably the Asbury Park Evening Press, saw the growth and prosperity of the area and began to make inroads into the paper's franchise. By the end of the 70s *the Leader* began to be less a "must read" for those looking for local news and advertising. Shanahan and later his sons, operated the paper until 1979.

That year television game show producer Mark Goodson, the owner of many small newspapers as investment vehicles, added *The Leader* to his collection. Management was put in the hands of the Ingersoll Corporation and later Goodson Newspapers. The Point Pleasant Beach printing facility was shut down and both printing and top management shifted to Toms River, where Goodson also owned the *Daily Observer*.

The Leader headquarters building that was so proudly opened in 1940 as the paper's "final" home was sold and its offices moved to the second floor of the Hayes Building at Arnold and Richmond Avenues, then to the second floor of the Point Pleasant Emergency and First Aid Squad building on Laurel Avenue. Editorial staffing was cut and frequent changes of management became the norm again.

In 1994 Joseph Fuchs of New York, a media analyst for a brokerage firm, and his wife Sheila purchased *The Leader* and the weekly *Seaside Heights Review*. Under the Rockfleet Media corporate banner, these weeklies again had their staffs cut. After initially producing two separate papers with a common second section, Rockfleet merged them. The combined new offering reduced the tabloid size and was renamed *The Coastal Leader Review*.

The final issue of the *Ocean County Leader* was published on March 24, 1998