

Floral Park Historical Society
The Docent's Digest

Summer Edition 2019

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On April 28th we enjoyed the unveiling of the eight new Historical Markers at the Floral Park Recreation/Pool Building. Reports are that folks are using the "Walk, Drive & Bike Tour Guide with map (available at the F. P. Library, Recreation/Pool Bldg. and Village Hall) to visit the 11 historic sites where markers have been installed. I want to thank the Dept. of Public Works Highway Crew for installing the markers in a timely manner and without any problems.

Since we did not have the Annual Meeting in May, I will give my Annual Report in September. A notice will be sent to members in August about the meeting. The FPHS Board is working on the budget and planning programs for September through to May of 2020. If anyone would like to suggest a program of a historical nature, please feel free to call or email me. Our meetings are the first Sunday of the month except in the summer and in January when we have our traditional New Year Luncheon. Remember to renew your membership.

On Resident's Day, the FPHS had a display table with many of our replicas of local buildings – then and now – and our brochures and some historic items from the museum. Maddie Aliano won a free FPHS membership for guessing the number of jelly beans in a teddy bear jar.

Several local residents have donated photos, documents and other memorabilia. Almost on a daily basis I am contacted by email or phone calls from people who have questions about local history, have items to donate or want to arrange a tour of the museum. It is great to know that people are thinking about us and it is fun accommodating them. They tell me they like visiting our small museum, especially the kids; it's not boring and doesn't take too long.

Sadly, a FPHS founder and former board member, Frances Hornberger, passed away in June. I was honored to be able to pay tribute to her at the memorial service held at the United Methodist Church.

The FPHS plans to continue to exhibit items from our archives at our program meetings. We have many things showcased at the museum, but the archives contain additional fascinating items with wonderful stories to tell about them.

Do you have a Floral Park Memorial H.S. "Excalibur" or Sewanhaka H.S. "Totem" yearbook to donate? We have an excellent collection of yearbooks but have gaps that we would love to fill. Call me if you have a yearbook that you feel you can part with.

We have revamped our website. It was stolen from us last year but through the generosity and knowhow of an attorney who handles this type of Internet thievery, the site was recovered. Once recovered we decided to upgrade the site and we are still in the process of enhancing it even more. Please be patient but in the meantime please visit the site:
www.floralparkhistorical.org

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JIM MACDONALD MAKES 8 STANDS



FPHS member and skilled carpenter, Jim MacDonald, was instrumental in making the April unveiling ceremony of the eight new Historical Markers a possibility, let alone a reality. Each cast iron marker weigh 50 lbs. and has a message printed on both sides. The FPHS wanted to display the eight new historical markers and unveil them at a 20th Anniversary special event before having them installed at the historic sites that had been selected in 2017.

It was a dilemma as to how to prop the heavy markers up on tables for an audience to see the unveiling and enable them to read the wording on each marker for the first time. After discussions with a number of people, all of whom had ideas for how to display the Historical Markers, it was decided that Jim MacDonald's idea was the one most likely to work. He admitted that he might need to do some experimenting.

Jim purchased the wood and began to make the first easel-like "marker" stand. He placed one of the 50 lb. markers on the stand and he was satisfied that the model he created would do the trick. He proceeded to make seven more stands. Since the event was four weeks away, he took the stands apart and stored them until the Friday before the event, at which time he put the stands together again and placed them on tables in the event room. Next, the eight Historical Markers were placed on the display stands. Each one was draped with a royal blue cloth in preparation for the unveiling ceremony.

On April 28, the Historical Markers were unveiled in front of an audience of 100 adults and children. No one knew the dilemma the Historical Marker Committee had faced. After the unveiling ceremonies, Jim took the stands apart. Soon the Highway Crew from the Public Works Dept. collected the Historical Markers and prepared to install them around the Village.

Jim's job was not done. A few years ago he repainted the Historical Marker that stands across from the library where the residence of John Lewis Childs, Founder and First President of Floral Park, and the Child's Seed Company Seed House. Now in 2019, Jim would set about refurbishing the Historical Marker in front of the United Methodist Church of Floral Park, the first church in the Village. The FPHS had decided to honor the late Bernice Hayes, a lifelong member of the church and FPHS founder, by restoring the Historical Marker. Now all 10 Historical Markers in the Village are looking good – National Blue and Sunflower Yellow – the official paint colors.



**Can you find Frances, Catherine and Marguerite Kirchner?
The triplets attended John Lewis Childs School, Photo: Grade 7C -1932-33.**

Frances Hornberger, a longtime resident of Floral Park, recently passed away at age of 98. She was a mother of eight and a successful career woman. Fran served as the Children's Librarian at the Floral Park Library until she was appointed Library Director in 1980. After retiring in 1985, she continued to be active in the community. She was member of the United Methodist Church and Methodist Woman's group. She served as president of the Floral Park Woman Club (FPWC) and was a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and FISH. She was the recipient of the Floral Park Spirit Award in recognition of her community service.

Fran was interested in Floral Park history and helped to preserve historical photos and records. She was much in favor of the formation of a historical society in 1999. She served on the FPHS Board. While a member of the FPWC, she was instrumental in having the club pay for the microfilming of several years of *The Gateway* newspapers that were stored at the library to enable more people to do research.

IN MEMORIAM



Frances Kirchner Hornberger

08.23.1920 - 06.02.2019

AN AMERICAN HERO

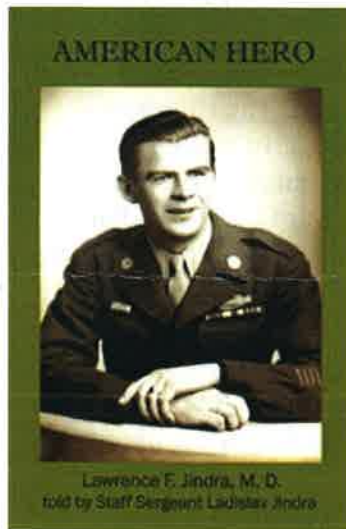
Ladislav Jindra, a longtime resident of Floral Park, came to the United States from Czechoslovakia at the age of 16. At age 17, he enlisted in the army as an infantryman. Little did he know that he would be one of the American heroes of WW II.

D-Day June 6, 1944

Omaha Beach was the second beach from the west among the five landing areas of the Normandy Invasion of World War II. Sgt. Ladislav Jindra was among the soldiers who took part in the D-Day assault. Many soldiers drowned during the approach from ships off shore or were killed by defending fire from German troops placed on heights surrounding the beach.

Fortunately, Sgt. Jindra survived the ordeal. His son, Lawrence F. Jindra, M.D., has authored the *American Hero* (copyright 2014), a book that relates his father's World War II story as told by his father. The book is available at the Floral Park Library. For more information, please visit: www.AmericanHeroUSA.com

The following is an excerpt from the *American Hero* which gives Sgt. Jindra's account of his D-Day experience.



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“As the PLC was loaded and started to move, we heard more noise than we had ever heard before. As we made our way toward the beach, occasionally some bullets flew over our heads and some hit the sides of the PLC. The trip felt like an eternity. The twenty or so minutes to the beach seemed like the longest journey of our lives. Some of us hoped it would never end and then again it seemed to happen very fast. Suddenly the ramp went down and we started to run off the PLC. Fortunately the water was not too deep as we got off. As we proceeded toward the beach, the water got deeper and deeper. Having a lot of weight on our backs, it became difficult to move forward. Meanwhile shells landed and exploded around us. The water was full of GIs moving forward. PLCs were all over the beachhead by this time, approaching the beach and off-loading soldiers.

We were told in training that when we got off the PLC, that we would be just partially in water and that we would be able to wade in toward the invasion beach. But the information we got was incorrect. We were off-loaded on a sand bar and we had to make it through water that was up to our heads at some points. As we waded to the shore, we saw lifeless bodies of some of our men floating face down in the water. We saw others get hit right next to ourselves. As we made it closer, those of us who were still in one piece, proceeded as best we could towards the beach.

Omaha Beach

When we reached the beach, anyone who tried to go forward got hit. Anyone who tried to jump over the obstacles at the shoreline was hit very shortly, because there were no holes on the beach in which we could take cover. In our briefings, we had been told planes from our air force would bomb the beaches to create holes for us as cover. We were told we could advance up the beach from crater to crater.

Very soon we realized that everything we had been promised was not there. The initial landing had gone wrong. We had not landed where we were supposed to land. It seemed that no one had. We were mixed in and bunched up with men from other companies. That created a problem, in that we could not work well together as a team. We did not know each other. But we did the best job we could.

The beach was full of mines and booby traps. The bombs were supposed to clear these for us, but they had not. The pillboxes were not silenced by naval gunfire, as we had been promised they would be. We started to formulate our own opinion of the landing and the battle. It became noticeable that morale had dropped. We were stuck on the beach for what seemed like hours and hours. Slowly we got a little bit organized. Some groups moved to the left and some groups moved to the right. Others that lost contact with their group just waited to join up with another group, to get or of the death trap that was on the beach.

The artillery tanks that were supposed to land behind us were not able to land. Many of them that made the attempt were hit and sunk. We learned later that that one of our artillery companies had been completely destroyed by the enemy fire and that they were never able to reach the beach, but pinned down as we were, we did not know this at the time. Finally one of the navy ships was able to keep the pillboxes and their deadly machine gunners quiet. As soon as that happened, we slowly started to move inland, at a high cost of our buddies. Those who deviated even a little were blown up by land mines.

The water and the beach were full of dead bodies. Somehow our 115th Regiment had it a little easier, since we were not the first part of the initial wave. Our friends of the 116th Regiment were in front of us, in the very first part of the first wave, and they suffered very heavy casualties. A lot of their platoons were destroyed completely. They had much heavier casualties than we did. The Germans had the beach zeroed in with their artillery, mortars, and 88s. To us, it looked like every shell that fell caused damage to us. The Air Force did not help us at all. The Navy was of little help, but, when our command was able to contact them, they helped us.

The Longest Day

We slowly advanced up one of the little natural draws on what I later found out was the Easy Red Sector of Omaha Beach. As we got a little further inland and needed artillery support to advance, we were told that the artillery would be ready to give fire support shortly. But we were told, for the time being, that we had to continue to advance on our own, without fire support. Little did we know? But most of our artillery was still on the landing ships and those ships did not try to reach us were either run aground or were destroyed along with our much needed artillery. For a while, as the morning went on into the afternoon, we were with the 5th Ranger Battalion or maybe it was the other way around. No one knew where we were or in what area we were at any given time. All we knew was that we were someplace (else) in France. We knew for sure our intelligence unit had goofed again, as usual, and that they knew even less than we did, and we knew very little, but we had been told to listen and to follow instructions of the intelligence unit.

By the late afternoon, more than half our company was together again and we moved left and right at times we were pushed back. This process repeated itself over and over again through the afternoon. Hardly anyone even knew from which direction we had come. It seemed to us that we had advanced at least 20 miles. The platoon leader checked his map and told us he thought we were less than 5 miles inland. We continued, advancing what we thought was forward, into the afternoon.

As it got dark, we placed ourselves against a hedgegrow. In the coming weeks, we would come to know them very well; these ever present thick land fences which dated back to the time of the romans and which now covered the Norman countryside in a mazelike, checkerboard pattern. as we settled in, we were told that everyone would stay awake until further notice were warned to be alert because the Germans would most likely attack our position.

Through the night in our area most of the German patrols that penetrated our lines were captured; only a few of them were killed. We suffered light casualties. When we could eat our meals consisted of C-rations and K-rations that each of us had carried off the the landing craft in our pockets. There was no distinction in these meals between breakfast, lunch, or supper. Whatever was given to you, you had, and that was your meal. The night was long but slowly the next day came.

Advance Inland

On the second day, D+1, we attempted to move early and we entered an open area which looked like a meadow and appeared about a mile wide. We were told we had to cross it as quickly as possible. Most of it was flooded and all kinds of debris floated in the standing water. We hoped that we would not be attacked in the water. Our wishes were fulfilled. Shortly after we reached solid ground, we started to receive small arms fire. We eliminated it and pushed forward. The German artillery and mortars laid it on us. We wished our artillery would help us, but we had no such luck.

We were able to outflank the enemy and make contact with our other company to our right. We discovered the other company had suffered heavy casualties. Later we found out from some of the prisoners whom we had captured, that the reason it had been so easy for us when we had crossed that swampy area, was that the Germans had never expected anyone to be so crazy as to attempt to cross that area. They had rushed their troops to the right and had attacked our other company..."

Thank you Sgt. Ladislav Jindra for your service.

Boy Scout Troop 4 – Floral Park



Celebrating 105th Anniversary

The Floral Park Boy Scout Troop 4's 105th Anniversary program will include a service at the United Methodist Church led by Reverend Ben Yoo, PhD. Troop 4 has consistently met at the church since it was founded in 1914. The service begins at 2 p.m. We will be celebrating with our local representatives and officials. After the service, all are invited to tour the scout locker in the church's basement, which has housed Troop 4 gear for all of these years!

Following the service, a Gala Celebration will take place at Plattdeutsche Park, 1132 Hempstead Turnpike Franklin Square, 5 p.m. until 9 p.m. Join us for dinner, dancing, raffles, memorabilia and more. Tickets are selling now for \$50 adults and \$30 children under 12. Purchase your tickets at: www.paypal.me/FPBSATROOP4 and select "family and friends" to avoid a service fee. Checks can also be made to Troop 4 BSA c/o United Methodist Church 35 Verbena Ave., Floral Park, NY 11001

If anyone has historical information about Troop 4 to share, we would love to hear from you. We are also compiling a journal to add special messages. Full page ads \$60, Half page \$30, Quarter page \$15 (business cards are quarter page).

Please contact: marinapav@aol.com or visit: Facebook at Troop 4 Floral Park.