

Wildwood Historical Society, Inc.



George F. Boyer Museum

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WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com

3907 Pacific Avenue
Wildwood, NJ 08260

*Gathering, preserving, and presenting the
Wildwoods' history*

Issue 57. Summer/Fall 2026

2026 Museum Hours

Summer

Now until Sept 5: Mondays-
Saturdays 10 am-3 pm

Fall

Sept 10-Oct 10: Thursdays-
Saturdays 10 am-3 pm

Discover the Untold Story While Sightseeing Down Wildwood's Boardwalk in the Historical Graphic Novel "Flag Me Down: The Story of Wildwood's Tramcar" by Michael Jasorka

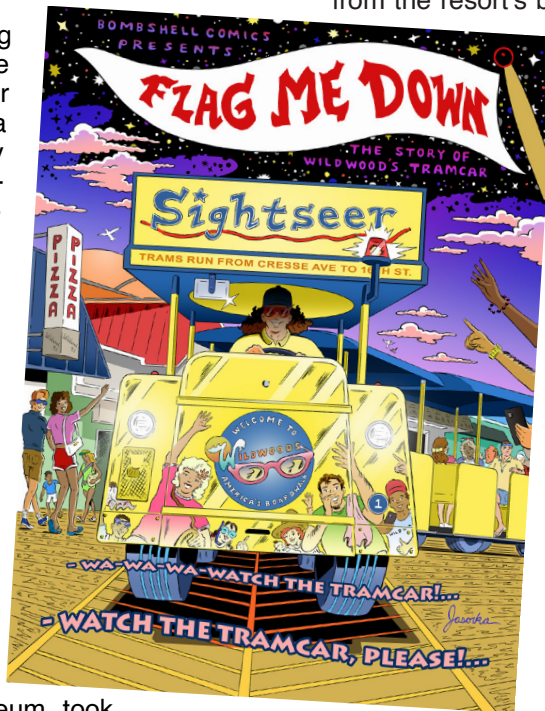
Wildwood, New Jersey... the home of boardwalks, long soft-sand beaches, the largest collection of mid-century Doo Wop motels, and of course, the Sightseer Tramcar. The tramcar gets its own visual chronicle of comprehensive history in *Flag Me Down: The Story of Wildwood's Tramcar*, the fourth Wildwood-based historical graphic novel from independent cartoonist and self-publisher, Michael Jasorka and his imprint, Bombshell Comics.

Told through both the passing engines and coaches of a subtle logo or color-changing Sightseer tramcar, *Flag Me Down* contains a chronicle of the Sightseer's nearly 80-year operation – an untold story. It covers the origins of Sebastian B. Ramagosa, the boardwalk tycoon known as "The King of the Boardwalk", whose beginnings connect with Wildwood's first casino pier. He brought the tramcars there to Wildwood on July 11, 1949. The graphic novel covers seven decades of the tramcar's history starring the various local and national celebrities, tramcar drivers, and local Wildwood officials.

Produced in association with the Wildwood Historical Society, the project was densely researched and thoroughly examined at the George F. Boyer Museum, took four years to produce, and is entirely crafted from hundreds of cited references, including over sixteen hundred reference images, personal interviews, and found home movies online.

The graphic novel is in full-color, 60 pages in length and can be purchased for \$30. Proceeds partially benefit the Wildwood Historical Society, George F. Boyer Museum. Pre-order a copy at www.bombshell-comics.com (ships September 1, 2026)

Upon its release, *Flag Me Down* will be stocked in the Wildwood Historical Museum gift shop at 3907 Pacific Avenue and online at WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com/shop.



New Book Release: Wildwood Music Memories by Taylor N. Henry & Rob Ascough

Once dubbed Las Vegas by-the-sea, the Wildwoods were famously a nightlife mecca. Fans filled nightclubs, music icons performed their hits, and new genres were born. This history will be the subject of an upcoming book by two Wildwood Historical Society board officers to be released by America Through Time in November 2026.

Wildwood Music Memories: Entertainment & Nightlife, Volume I, 1885-1969 takes readers on a historical and nostalgic trip through the Wildwoods' legendary live music scene from the resort's beginnings to its heyday. It is the first in a series that will span decades, genres, and venues.

At their height, Wildwood and North Wildwood were as happening as New York, Miami Beach, or Las Vegas. From hotspots like the Starlight Ballroom to the Surf Club, the Riptide to the Rainbow, and Club Avalon to the Manor Supper Club, readers are transported back to when the Treniers and Bill Haley & the Comets sparked a rock & roll revolution, Chubby Checker launched a world-altering dance craze, and the Isley Brothers performed with an unknown Jimi Hendrix.

Generations of fans arrived by train—and later the Garden State Parkway—and danced to jazz, swing, rhythm & blues, country western, and rock. And it all happened in bars, cafés, and nightclubs in the Wildwoods, New Jersey.

Book release party & signing

The Wildwood Historical Museum at 3907 Pacific Avenue will host the authors

for a book release party and signing on Sunday, December 13, 2026 from 2 to 4 pm. Copies will be available for \$24.99.

Both authors have published local history books before. Historical society president Taylor N. Henry, MA, wrote *Wildwoods Houses Through Time* (2018).

"Wildwood, music, and history are passions of mine, so it was a dream to combine them," Henry said. "I am extremely proud of this series and cannot wait to share what we've uncovered through hundreds of hours of research."

Treasurer Rob Ascough co-authored *Images of America: Hunt's Pier* (2011). He is also editor of *RollerCoaster!*, the official magazine of American Coaster Enthusiasts.

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Kelly's Pool Room in Wildwood, NJ

by David Neff

Back in the mid twentieth century, on East Oak Avenue between New Jersey Ave. & Pacific Ave. on the south side of the street next to a small narrow diner, whose name I don't recall [ed. note: *Ralph's Diner*], was Charlie Kelly's Pool Room. At this point in time, I have no way of knowing when Mr. Kelly had established his business, but my brother Phil and I became regulars there in 1956. I was 15 and Phil was 17. Often we would meet up with friends there to play a few games. At other times we would just play against each other, honing our skills. Some of the regulars that I remember playing there were Gil, Eddie, Buster and Skeets.

The interior of the business was of a relatively narrow width, however it went back fairly deeply. Off the front entrance was a counter of sorts, behind which Charlie would sit on his stool so that he could observe the comings and goings, collect table time "rents", sell sodas and snacks, and monitor the activities on his three large regulation sized pool tables. The three tables sat one after the other from the front to the back with their long ends facing east and west. Along the east and west walls were chairs, and hanging along the west wall were several racks filled with cue sticks.

Each table was lit with a large rectangular low hanging light fixture. Overhead between the tables stretched ball count wires with markers, one for each of two 'Straight Pool' players. A common way to keep score when playing Straight Pool was with an overhead wire or string with wooden markers. Each tenth marker in the sequence, marked 10, 20, 30, etc., were the largest and hung down below the others. Each fifth one between the tens markers were black, and between those were sequences of four beads of a lighter color. Games would be played to 50, 100, or the traditional 150. Only the best players played Straight Pool seriously. Generally, they were older, middle-aged guys, and at times when two of the very best met to play, many of the others in the room would gather around to watch. Money, sometimes in substantial amounts, was usually bet on those games. More commonly played games at Kelly's were Eight Ball, Nine Ball, Rotation and a game known by various names; Kelly Pool, Pill Pool or Pea Pool.

The latter was reportedly invented by Chicagoan, Calistus "Kelly" Mulvaney in the late eighteen hundreds, thus the name "Kelly Pool." 15 small tokens, which were marble sized with one flat side numbered 1 to 15, were placed into a shaker bottle and each person who was going to play was given a token, the numbers on the tokens were kept secret. The number on each player's token became the numbered pool ball that had to be sunk in a pocket to win the game, even if their ball was sunk by another player in error. Every player would put in an agreed amount, 25 cents, 50 cents, or some other amount, and the winner would collect the money.

Whenever the tables became idle, Charlie would instigate, and at times play in, a game of Nine Ball, or "Pea Pool," which was the variant name of Kelly Pool used at Charlie Kelly's. The games were quick and fast and Charlie would offer encouragement to the losers saying "one good one pays for many a bad one", inasmuch as if you won a game when there were eight players, you would have funds to play in eight more games.

Back in 1956 the federal minimum wage was one dollar per hour. The average pay for an adult was \$1.80 an hour,

but for us young people we'd be lucky to get the minimum wage, as many employers paid a lesser amount 'under the table'. And for those of us working in restaurants as busboys or kitchen help, there was a special provision in New Jersey wage law that allowed an employer to pay less than a dollar an hour when two meals per shift were provided, usually breakfast and lunch, or lunch and dinner. I'm not positive, but as I recall the hourly figure was eighty-seven cents. With that providing some perspective I'm trying to remember what the cost was to purchase and hour of table time at the pool room. Perhaps 50 cents per player. Charlie made his money renting out table time and selling candy, snacks and soda. Always the salesman he encouraged purchases stating, tongue in cheek, that he needed the money because his dog would only eat lamb chops, which he claimed he would have to pick up on his way home.

I was blessed at birth with very efficient kidneys, but cursed with a small bladder. Shortly after drinking a soda, I would find it necessary to use the bathroom, which was all the way at the back of the establishment along with an area



Above: Kelly's Pool Room and Ralph's Diner on East Oak Avenue in 1966. Courtesy Wildwood Historical Society collection.

which appeared to be a private area of Mr. Kelly's with a table, chairs, refrigerator, etc. Walled off from and between the pool table area and this back area was an area with a sole shaded light hanging down over a table at which shadowy figures sat playing cards. As the players sat back in their chairs, their faces couldn't be seen. As I walked by, I might quickly glance in their direction, but would keep moving and never stared. I never knew who they were and thought it best not to know, but I suspect Charlie garnered substantial additional income from that backroom table.

Charlie ran a tight ship. Arguments among players were not tolerated. Regulars knew that as Charlie sat behind the counter, close at hand was his baseball bat. I saw him hold it up a few times as he hollered "knock it off" to anyone causing a commotion, but I never witnessed him having to use

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New Book Release: Wildwood Music Memories by Taylor N. Henry & Rob Ascough

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"I've been vacationing in the Wildwoods my entire life, and studying its music history enabled me to appreciate the area on an entirely different level," Ascough said. "It really is a special place, regardless of one's musical interests."

Where to buy

The book will be available for preorder and purchase wherever books are sold, including Amazon, Through-Time.com, Hooked on Books, and the Wildwood Historical Museum gift shop and online store (WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com/shop).

Volume II

The second book in the series is expected to be released in 2027. Wildwood Music Memories: Entertainment & Nightlife, Volume II will cover the Wildwoods' music scene from 1970–2026. In addition to Wildwood, North Wildwood, and Wildwood Crest, it will also span nightlife in Diamond Beach, West Wildwood, and Shawcrest, including venues like the Playpen, Oasis, Stardust, and Wildwood Convention Hall. To learn more about this America Through Time release, visit www.Through-Time.com.

To stay informed about release dates and events, please follow the Wildwood Historical Society on Facebook or Instagram, and visit our website, WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com.

Kelly's Pool Room in Wildwood, NJ

by David Neff

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it. Regulars respected Charlie and in addition didn't want to be banned from his establishment. Thinking back, if I had to say who Charlie reminded me of, my thoughts would immediately go to W. C. Fields. Partly for his looks, but more so for his demeanor. I don't recall if Charlie retired, or died, but by the early 1960s his business was closed, and shortly thereafter another larger pool hall had opened, the Miscue Billiard Lounge, which as I recall was located between Pacific and Atlantic Avenues, perhaps on Lincoln Ave, I don't remember. But it was there that I first saw and played on pool tables that were colors other than the traditional green. I learned how to play just about all of the various games that could be played on a pool table at Charlie Kelly's, and then furthered my skills at the Miscue.

Regardless of the size of a pool table, the playing surface of all tables are twice as long as they are wide. After learning and playing for years on regulation sized tables, which were nine feet long by four and a half feet wide, I found it so much easier playing in bars on their typical seven feet by three and a half feet tables, where a friend and I playing as partners consistently did quite well. Games were generally played for beers, no one ever minded buying a glass of beer for the winners. My friend was keen on playing for money, but I got to the point where I would no longer play for money, because when we would beat the opposition over and over it would inevitably cause hard feelings and then the games were no longer fun, but my friend and I did enjoy many free beers and free games as well, as challengers had to put *their* quarter into the table to release the balls for the next game.

Honoring the House

by Buck Russom, Board Member

Growing up, I enjoyed winter. Sledding and ice skating with friends and family were fun.

But when the calendars turned past President's Day, the countdown began to "Head'n down the shore."

Growing up as a summer resident of The Wildwoods was about splashing in the surf, building sandcastles, and having fun on the boardwalk. As I got older, I learned how to carry two glasses of beer in one hand while managing three glasses in the other. ... Hey. The Shamrock sold beers, "five for a dollar."

Interests at the shore changed with time. The one constant was the house.

The house is large, but not palatial. Extended family would visit over the summers. Cousins would sleep two or three to a bedroom. The outside shower only had cold water. My mom made the best broiled scallops.

The house was the center of our family life during the summers. Family members were born. Others passed. But

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Tram Car #8 Restoration Underway

After being rescued by the Wildwood Historical Society from a junkyard fate, the retired Tram Car #8 is now being restored. Leading the job are Joseph A. Arico and David J. Luke volunteering their time, expertise, and care.

Per their plan: "We intend to work on the Tram Car Tug for three days. We will repair any broken or rusted parts on the body of the Tug. We will remove all old vinyl stickers then paint the Tug." Next, ABS Signs will take care of decals.

Work has already begun on the roof, which will be stripped of rust and reattached to the body. The vehicle will not be operable, but it will look like its old self once it's moved into the George F. Boyer Museum, where it will become an interactive exhibit.

Because Arico and Luke are not charging for labor, the cost of materials is the main expense. To donate, please send back a donation in the envelope included with this newsletter or visit <https://www.wildwoodhistoricalmuseum.com/give>. Thank you for supporting tram car preservation!

Below: Tram Car #8's roof under restoration. Courtesy Joseph Arico and David Luke.



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Honoring the House by Buck Russom, Board Member

the physical and sentimental beauty of the house endured.

The Preserving the Wildwoods committee of Wildwood Historical Society was created to recognize families who have chosen to maintain their Historical House on the Five-Mile Island and the memories it holds.

Historical Houses that are recognized by the program receive:

- An embossed metal lawn plaque that recognizes the house's historic recognition.
- A framed certificate of the distinction.
- Participation in the Wildwood Historical Society's Registry of Historic Houses.

Houses that are recognized as historic by Preserving the Wildwoods must possess the following characteristics.

- Be built before 1951.
- Retain the architectural style of when it was built.
- Be maintained in good physical condition.

If you are interested in having your house on Wildwoods' Five-Mile Island recognized as Historic, please complete the application at <https://www.wildwoodhistoricalmuseum.com/historical-recognition-program>.

We look forward to recognizing your historic house and learning about how your treasured house is a home of fond memories.



Pictured are some of the first round of recipients of Historic House plaques in 2025. The committee seeks 2026 applicants.

Our Team

Taylor Henry, *President*

Carolyn Vinci, *Vice President*

Rob Ascough, *Treasurer*

Larry Lillo, *Secretary*

Board: John Serpico, Mary Lou Wilson, Cathy Nesbitt Smith, Buck Russom

Kathi Johnson, *Museum Manager*

Bruce Tell, *Assistant Manager*

Volunteers: Al Alven, Jackson Betz, Sean Carragher, Julia Ittah, Bob Lee, Chris Pohle, Mark McKay, Karen Samuels, Pary Tell, Lew Vinci

Advisory: Alan Gould, Susan Fox Hirschmann, Michael Hirsch, Mike Mattera

In Memoriam: Bob Scully, Bob Bright, Al Brannen

Subscribe to our free monthly E-newsletter too! Visit wildwoodhistoricalmuseum.com

Membership

Please renew your membership if you haven't done so recently! Memberships and donations help cover the costs of newsletters and mailings, and help us keep the lights on at the museum. To donate, scan one of the QR codes shown to the left.

Visit wildwoodhistoricalmuseum.com to renew your membership, view past newsletters, buy items from our gift shop, donate a vehicle, or get a taste of Wildwoods history!

Funding has been made possible in part by the New Jersey Historical Commission/Department of State, and the Cape May County Board of County Commissioners through the Division of Culture & Heritage



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