



# WILDWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

## GEORGE F. BOYER MUSEUM

Our mission is to gather, preserve & present the history & memories of The Wildwoods.

609.523.0277

WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com

3907 Pacific Avenue Wildwood, NJ 08260

Issue #35 Summer 2015

### MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS

Wildwood Historical Society's  
**POSTCARD, ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES SHOW**

**OPEN HOUSE**

**Saturday, JUNE 13, 2015**

**10 AM to 4 PM**

### SILVER ANNIVERSARY

25 years ago, on April 28, 1990, the Wildwood Historical Society moved its collection of photos and artifacts to its present location at 3907 Pacific Avenue via a Human Chain Event. A portion of the artifacts were passed along the chain. The Wildwood Fire Dept carted over larger items. Others were hand carried by a parade of volunteers to their destination. A few speeches, a party & a cake rewarded all the helping hands. Some photos of this amazing transaction are on our website:

[WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com](http://WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com)

### The Leader Project

The WHS possesses old Leader newspapers covering over 100 years. We are having them digitized, to not only preserve the deteriorating papers but to create searchable files at a cost of about \$4000 a decade. Thanks to donations from the Byrne Foundation & Crest Bank & a grant from Cape May Culture & Heritage, over a decade of newspapers are completed. As we are granted donations, more newspapers can be preserved and shared at the museum.



## Casino Arcade Clock

Tick, tick, tick... Formerly situated at 3401 Atlantic Ave, on the corner of the Casino Arcade, a cast iron clock has been raised anew and is keeping time in the George F. Boyer Museum's parking lot.

You may have followed some of the refurbishing progress on our Facebook page. Randy Hentges and the ABS Sign Co. crew have totally dismantled, sandblasted, cleaned, repaired, redesigned and repainted the old Hamilton company clock. They posted some pictures of the steps as they worked. The massive clock was gingerly maneuvered onto a small wooden dolly and wheeled out the museum's storage room. It was rolled and hoisted onto the pick-up truck for its journey to the shop. There they began exploring the inner mechanisms and planning their restoration strategy.

The Center City Plaza clock, as the crown above the clock face proclaimed, was previously installed at Oak and Atlantic Avenues. The huge red timepiece welcomed thrill seekers to amusements rides, games skills & other forms of entertainment. Guests of the Casino Arcade or families strolling past would be able to read it a distance away. Teens could keep track of their remaining time until curfew. As time passed, its appearance & maintenance slipped & in 1990 plans were coordinated to take it down.

On our Facebook page Anne Vinci divulged more of the story. Across Atlantic Avenue, Dotty Gannon, of the Premiere Motel, ob-

tained permission from the owners, the Edelman family, to store this quaint relic of Wildwoods' past. Mayor Fred Wager, Commissioner Bill Mitchell & City electrical inspector Bill Gannon were among those involved in this endeavor. The Wildwood Fire Dept. lassoed the clock with straps, lifted it with a crane & transported it to the Historical Museum. And there it sat for almost 25 years!

In the summer of 2014 the Center City clock was featured in the AC Press declaring the historical society's desire to resurrect the time keeper. ABS Signs offered to restore it, working on it between jobs. The motor, clock face & glass cover were replaced, layers of paint were removed from the outer casing and it was repainted candy apple red again. It was furnished with a newly designed banner announcing the "Wildwood Museum". It looks marvelous and it runs!

ABS Signs donated their expertise, creativity & labor. A request to the Boardwalk Improvement Development granted us the money for the necessary replacement components. Other local organizations and businesses also came to our aid. A new mast was provided by Mitchell Welding & Iron Works and installation was completed by E. Troiano & Sons. It's awesome what can be accomplished with some help from our many generous supporters. Thank you so much.  
-Kathy Skouras





## Original KONG helped Moreys & Wildwood scale to new heights

This summer, visitors to Morey's Surfside Pier will encounter a new attraction that is representative of the Wildwoods' zany, over-the-top character, as well as a nod to its colorful past. KONG, installed in late April and opened to the public over Memorial Day Weekend, is an unmissable spectacle because, yes, even here on 5 Mile Beach, the sight of a giant ape clad in a bright yellow "I Love Wildwood" t-shirt scaling a 60 foot lighthouse is a bit out of the ordinary. (And, oh, did we mention that he snorts smoke and fog, while clutching one of the island's signature Sightseer Tram Cars in his massive right mitt?)

When the Morey Organization removed the classic, but aging, Condor after the 2011 season, the search was on for a worthy new centerpiece at Surfside. The Kang'A'Bounce served as an admirable stand-in for three years, while other options were considered. But it would ultimately be the lasting impact of an icon from the pier's early history that would determine its future.

"We're on a bit of a... I guess you could call it a nostalgia kick of sorts," explained Jack Morey, co-owner and executive vice president of Morey's Piers. "But it was a no-brainer. Here, we had the opportunity to bring this concept back to life, one of our most well-known landmarks over the past 50 years."

"Landmark" is the operative word, as both the original and the reimagined version (and, for that matter, virtually all major attractions added by the Moreys in between) were designed to function as much more than "just" amusement rides.

The original KONG was a bona fide game changer, debuting just three years after the Morey family entered the Wildwoods' amusement scene with a large slide on a small pier, a literal stone's throw north of powerhouse Hunt's Pier. In fact, the monster would have fit right in at the "Oceanic Wonderland," among classics like the Golden Nugget Mine Ride, Pirate Ship SKUA and Jungland, which were in part inspired by the Hunt family's motion picture industry roots.

KONG was the brainchild of legendary local ride creator Fred Mahana, himself heavily influenced by the horror cinema genre. Mahana designed the 35foot, 3ton gorilla as an obvious homage to the 1933 film "King Kong," in which a raging, oversized gorilla climbs the Empire State Building.

The fiberglass figure was constructed, fittingly, in New York City by Karl Fleme of "Arts and Crafters." The process took nine months before transportation to the Wildwoods was ready. KONG would make his grand debut, turning heads left and right on the Boardwalk, in the Spring of 1972. Like his movie counterpart, he clutched a blonde damsel in his hand as miniature bi-planes (the actual "ride" element) swarmed around him. He also let out a hideous shriek, which was actually the recording of a real lion's roar played backward. (Fun side note: That didn't last long, as locals soon filed a petition to have the beast silenced.)

Interestingly, KONG's reign of terror would be relatively short-lived; its time as a functioning attraction, even shorter. The bi-planes were removed after the 1975 season, and the structure was moved to the roof of the adjacent Bonanza Shooting Gallery. It was there that KONG would tower, still a menacing force but rapidly deteriorating, awaiting a refurbishment that would never be realized. A planned \$10,000 facelift back in New York had to be scrapped after the frame fell to pieces on the beach during the removal process in July 1980.

Thus, very quietly, ended the existence of one of the Wildwoods' most intriguing and influential icons. During its time at 26th Street, the Moreys added many of the signature attractions that would signal their rise to prominence. It was preceded by the WipeOut! slide in 1969, but followed in short order by staples of the '70s like the Jumbo Jet, Haunted House, Planet of the Apes/Star Wars, The Spirit of '76, and In Concert.

So memorable and still-talked-about, the Moreys decided the time was right for KONG to finally make his way back to his rightful perch at Surfside Pier. The new attraction is much more sophisticated and detailed, which is no knock on the original. "Technology has come a long way in the 35 years since," Morey noted.

The 1972 version cost a then quite hefty \$74,000 to bring to life. Morey's doled out "\$1.6 million bananas" this time around. It probably doesn't have to be pointed out, but the reincarnated KONG has a full body, allowing him to climb the lighthouse that stands nearly two times as tall as the crown of the original.

The spirit of the former "King of the Boardwalk" lives on in other ways, as KONG will continue to battle World War II inspired planes that circle the beast.

"When reimagining a classic, it's important to respect and pay tribute to the past, but to also ensure the creation of something new that can stand on its own. Hopefully for many years to come," said Morey. "The original was such a special part of the early days of Morey's Piers. We feel that this is the best of both worlds."  
-Al Alven

The George F. Boyer Museum's brightly colored poster, designed by Russ Simmons, was judged 1st place for the 2014 Kevin M Hale Publication award of the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey.



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{ Welcome to our new board member  
 - Dorothy Kulisek! }

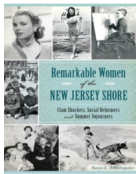
**Summer 2015 Hours:**

Monday-Saturday  
 9 AM to 2 PM

Oct 1- Oct 31, 2015

Thursday, Friday & Saturday  
 9 AM to 2 PM

What do you know about Dr. Margaret Mace?



Have you heard of Captain Joy Bright Hancock or New Jersey's first female Mayor, Doris W. Bradway? Last summer, Karen Schnitzspahn researched these fascinating women of

Wildwood at the Wildwood Historical Museum. Their 'her' story is included in Karen's newly published book, "Remarkable Women of the New Jersey Shore". Below is one of the photos and its caption:

"For the past 10 years, The Five Mile Beach Sun in Wildwood, NJ has been honoring the legacy of Dr. Margaret Mace with this eventful photo shoot, where a handful of her 6,000 babies that she delivered, gather together for a reunion every July at the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse. This photo of the 2014 reunion was taken by The Sun's editor, Dorothy McMonagle Kulisek. This year's reunion will be held Monday, July 13, 2015 at 10am at the Hereford Lighthouse."



**Remembering Memorial Day Parades**

Now that Memorial Day is near, I was looking back and recalling the parades we had back in the 50's and 60's. I do remember being in my last parade around 1961-1962.

The parade began at the American Legion Home on Atlantic Avenue and went south to Rio Grande Avenue. It stopped at Memory Lane so a wreath could be placed there and the Honor Guard would fire a volley of rounds from their M1 rifles. Young boys would be chasing after the empty brass shells as they discharged from the rifles.

From Rio Grande Avenue the parade would turn on to Pacific Avenue and proceed north to Oak Avenue. It then turned west to New Jersey Avenue and stopped at the Memorial on the west side of New Jersey Avenue. Again, a wreath would be placed there and a volley of fire from the M1's would take place.

The parade would then march east on Wildwood Avenue to the beach. On the beach there was a ceremony and then the members of the beach patrol would take the wreaths out to the ocean in their lifeboats. When I was in the Cub Scouts we would carry the wreaths in the parade. My next door neighbor, Mike Biondi, and I would carry the wreaths for his 2 uncles. Mario and Michael Mag-



gio were both killed in World War II. Their parents, Joseph and Frances Maggio, owned Maggio's Market on Taylor and Pacific Avenues.

Now getting back to my involvement with my last parade. I marched with the newly formed Sea Scouts Troop. We held our meetings at the North Wildwood Recreation enter. George Land, my old football coach was our Scout Master. We wore old Coast Guard Dress Whites and we even had a boat. I have the complete parade on 8mm film at home. The film includes the Wildwood High School Band and the North Wildwood Junior High School Band. Some of the individuals on the film include my cousin, Mickey Muratore, with the beach patrol, Ernie Odgers, playing the trombone with the Wildwood High Band and Shotgun Sheldon disciplining one of his Wildwood Crest Scouts.

One of these days I hope to show the film at the Museum so we all can remember the Memorial Day Parade.

Let us never forget Memorial Day.  
 -Larry M. Lillo

**Mystery Photo** was identified as MacAlamen Beach Grille @ 11th & Beach in North Wildwood by Tina Smyth.



Thank you!



Thank you to our recent Brick donors:  
 Dock St. Seaford  
 The Hoff Family  
 Ted Rogalis  
 The Harry Family

Pavers will be installed at the entrance of the museum

**Brick Pavers**

We are still taking orders for pavers. If you would like to honor a family, person or business, give us a call at 609.523.0277 & we'll mail you an order form. Or download the form at WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com. The 4" x 8" brick costs \$100. & the 8" x 8" brick is \$225.



**MEMBERSHIP**

Please renew your membership. If you have done so already, thank you. Donations are welcome, too! Membership donations help cover the costs of newsletters, mailings & notices of special events.

www.WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com  
WildwoodHistoricalSociety@hotmail.com

The Wildwood Historical Society, Inc. & The George F. Boyer Museum are made possible through the contributions of many individuals. The gifts you make today help preserve the memories of the past. Please consider the Historical Society in your will.



We are always looking for new active Board Members

**Friends of the Wildwood Historical Society, Inc.**

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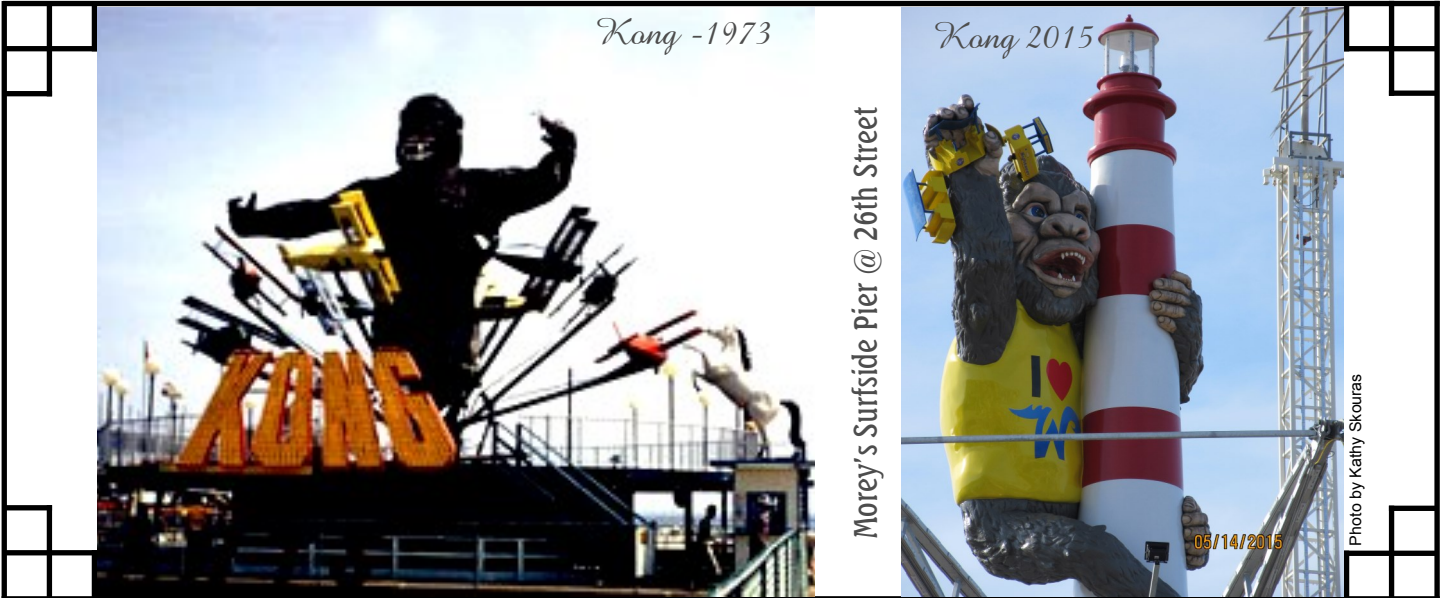
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