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## **Damascus Heritage Society Newsletter**

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**THE DEVOTED CURATOR OF DAMASCUS HISTORY**

**SPRING 2008**

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### **From the Editor**

Spring has come to Damascus and the Heritage Society is happy to see it arrive. We have made much progress behind the scenes during the winter months and now, like spring, we are ready to be seen out and about in the community. We had a special session in January where plans were made for a year of fund raising events. In February, one of our newest members hosted our first event at the Music Café. It was a jewelry show and was not only successful but also fun for the several members who stayed all day eating lunch and drinking coffee. By March, our fund raising effort paid off with a big response to our promo day at the local Ledo's Pizza. The gentlemen owners of Ledo's are most supportive and cooperative where community interests are concerned. In April we had a very successful Vendor Expo at the Recreation Center and upcoming in May, we are having an Elvis concert at the Damascus United Methodist Church. You can read the Elvis article elsewhere in this newsletter. We had a table display in the lobby of the library on April 12 during a special library event, where we had our literature available and where we explained our museum project to many library visitors. We have been attending organizational meetings for Damascus Days where we will again have a booth. This year at Damascus Days we will have the addition of the games donated to us by the Rotary. The Rotary Club has disbanded after many years of service to the community and they have graciously given their Damascus Days games to us. We will also participate in the Damascus Community Fair in September, as we did last year.

We had a mail campaign in March which went out to one hundred residents and friends. At this writing the responses are coming in and are greatly appreciated. More information about our mail campaign will also appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

We have two portable classrooms that were donated by the county, we have the permits for the foundations and necessary sidewalks and ramps, and we have bids from several contractors who are ready to do the work. As you can see, we are working hard to make our dream come true, but in order to start, we need funds.

Please help support the Heritage Society's efforts to preserve the agricultural, educational, economic, social, and spiritual history of our hometown of Damascus.

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### **Museum Fund Drive Begins**

**By Ephraim Salins**

The Damascus Heritage Society has received a grant for \$200,000 from the State of Maryland. However, the grant comes with some requirements before we receive the money. We have to raise \$50,000 in cash and \$50,000 in in-kind contributions in order to qualify for the \$200,000. In January, we initiated a major fund drive that included letter solicitations suggested by Society member, John Grigg. Mr. Grigg is a long time former resident and was a biology teacher at Damascus High School. He now lives in a retirement community in Frederick, but his heart is still in Damascus where he had lived since he first came here to teach in 1960. Our mailing included

a note from Mr. Grigg, a letter from Randy Scritchfield, President of the Damascus Heritage Society, and a brochure informing the recipients of the purpose and the goals of the Society. The letters were mailed in early March to a number of Damascus residents known to be interested in the establishment of a museum. Responses have been good but many more donations will be required if we are to meet our goal. About ten charter memberships and/or donations of \$1,000 or more and a number of smaller donations totaling about \$7,000 have been received. Combined, these monies provide about 1/3 of the total required to move forward with the construction of a temporary museum. All donations are tax deductible. This should be attractive to donors willing to make major contributions in support of this community effort.

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## **Construction Planning**

**By Dan King**

Construction planning for the temporary museum to be located behind the Damascus Library continues to move forward. Building permits have been received for the museum. Everything is expensive, and the building permits alone cost over \$2,000.

At the moment, Jim Starcher is contacting contractors and getting bids for the erection of the facility. There are four stages involved:

- (1) constructing concrete piers on which to place the trailers to be used as the museum
- (2) moving the trailers from the "staging area" behind the library about 50 feet north onto the piers
- (3) constructing handicapped ramps and handicapped access
- (4) installing electrical service

Once all of these steps are completed, the trailers will then be sealed from the weather and we will be able to move forward with interior work and the placement of artifacts. However, before we can proceed with contracting, we must raise sufficient money through donations and fund raisers.

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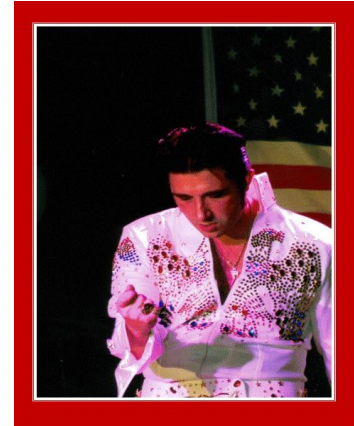
## **Elvis Tribute Concert**

**By Daria King and Linda Olsen**

An Elvis Tribute Concert has been scheduled for Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> in the Great Hall of the Damascus United Methodist Church. There will be a Silent Auction preceding the show (7 PM, Auction; 8 PM Show).

Will Debley of Mt. Airy, who is an Elvis Tribute Artist, is performing at no charge for the benefit of the

museum. Will is a star among those who pay homage to the King of Rock and Roll. He was chosen out of thousands by Sun Records to perform as Elvis, chosen by Marian Coker to sing with the Jordinaires, invited to Memphis to sing at Graceland, and was a finalist in the 2007 Images of the King World Championships. We are very fortunate that Will is willing to do this for us.



*Will Debley*

Before the show we will be having a Silent Auction with a number of great items including: A Weekend in Ocean City; a New Guitar & Music Lesson; Portrait of Your Pet; Turned Cherry Bowl; Hand-painted Wall Clock; Arbonne Beauty Products; Watercolor Painting; Hand Painted Ceramics; Silpada Sterling Silver Jewelry; David Winter Cottage; Gift Baskets or Certificates from Hyatts Building Supply, Beall's Florist, the Music Café, All American Bicycle, Maryland Ensemble Theater, Tom & Ray's, Damascus Nails, Fitness-4-You, Gladhill Tractor Mart; Dinner for Two at McCormick & Schmick; Three Hours Math Tutoring; Frame from Roby's; Consultation on Starting a Small Business; Consultation on Securing Government Contracts; Ward Museum Book, Tickets, & Reproductions; Waterfowl Carving; and more to come.

It will be a great show with an unbelievable auction beforehand. Join us. Tickets are available from the show organizers, Linda Olsen at 301-253-1811 and Daria King at 301-253-1564.

## **Oral History Workshop**

**By Pat Williams**

Several members of the Damascus Heritage Society attended a workshop held at Waters House in Germantown. The workshop was sponsored by the Montgomery County Historical Society and was presented by the Library of Congress. The Damascus Heritage Society has recorded several oral histories of the oldest residents of Damascus and has plans to conduct more. Although the workshop focused on the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress, it gave the participants the basic information needed to conduct interviews in the future.

The Veterans History Project began in 2000 and is aimed at collecting oral history interviews, memoirs, letters, diaries, photographs, and other original material from any war time American veteran. If you know a veteran or a civilian in a support position who has a story to tell, consider conducting an oral interview and placing it at the Library of Congress. For instructions on how to participate or to read a veteran's story, go to <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

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## **Damascus History Moment**

**By Harvey Ziegler and Pat Williams**

Friendship United Methodist Church is an important part of the history of Damascus and its African-American community. Originally built in the late 1800's, the name Friendship came from the name of the land grant on which the Moxley family developed Friendship Farm at Clagettsville. The Moxleys donated land and materials to the African-American community and the members constructed the church. Some of the original members were the Holseys, Gaithers, Grays, Taylors, Welshes, Zeiglers, Potts, Lyles and Donnaleys. A few descendents of these first church members still live in the Damascus area today. The second Friendship Church (and the one still in use today) was built in 1901. In 1963, the Friendship Church caught fire and the roof (originally tin) was badly damaged. When the church was rebuilt, the roof was lowered. Friendship and Damascus United Methodist Church merged in 1969 and it remains as a partnership today. Friendship United Methodist

Church has played an important role in the social and spiritual lives of the area's African-American community for more than a century and is expected to continue to be an active part of the Damascus community in the foreseeable future.

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## **Future Meetings**

We meet on the third Monday of the month, unless it falls on a holiday, in which case it will then be moved to the fourth Monday. All meetings are held in the large conference room at the Damascus Public Library unless noted otherwise. For 2008 the remaining meetings are as follows:

May 19, 2008  
June 16, 2008  
July 21, 2008  
August 18, 2008  
September 15, 2008  
October 20, 2008  
November 17, 2008  
December 15, 2008

Mark your calendar now.

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### ***Become a friend of the Damascus Heritage Society Inc.***

All payments are tax deductible - we are a 501c3 organization.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \$25     Family \$35

Business/Organization \$50     Contributor \$100

Patron \$200     Charter \$1,000

Other gift: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: DHS, P.O. Box 218, Damascus, MD 20872