



# The Friends of Mountwood Park Newsletter

Winter 2026 Issue Vol. 17, No. 1

## *Wonderful Winter*



Photo by courtesy of Karen Lunch appeared in  
Birds & Bloom magazine

*No matter what yesterday  
was like, birds begin the next  
day with a song.*

*Unknown*

## **Officers of The Friends of Mountwood Park**

Peggy Squires, President  
Rose Russell, Vice President  
Dina Braniff, Secretary  
Mike Naylor, Treasurer

Our mailing address:  
FRIENDS OF MOUNTWOOD PARK  
PO BOX 2094  
PARKERSBURG, WV 26102  
You can contact Mountwood Park by  
calling (304) 679-3611.

*Birds chirping around you is  
a beautiful realization that  
life is incredibly good. Let  
this sound be a gentle break  
in your routine.*

*Hiral Nagda, author*

## **Letter from the President**

Recapping 2025, it was a busy and exciting year--the Easter Egg Hunt, Fishing Derby, Adventure Camp, the addition to the Museum and the Diorama, Woof Fest Pageant and Event, and Volcano Days. Our Pageant Director and Queen were in Charleston January 8, 9, 10, and 11 at the West Virginia Fairs and Festival. There were 92 Queens competing for the title. We hope they had a wonderful experience and made fantastic memories. We want to thank the Park Staff and all Volunteers that helped make everything possible. It was a good year and could not have happened without team work.

Looking forward to 2026. We are planning this year's events so come out and help us. Our meetings are the 2nd Thursday of each month, usually 1:00 pm. Occasionally we have an evening meeting so it is important that you check the time. We do not want to exclude

anyone so let me know what works best for you. Everybody is welcome.

See you at the Park. Peggy Squires,  
President

*When I die, I want to die like  
my grandfather who died  
peacefully in his sleep. Not  
screaming like all the  
passengers in his car.*

*Will Rogers, actor, and  
humorous social  
commentator*

## Dues 2026

**By Carolyn Naylor**

We want to thank the members who have already paid dues for 2026. For members who have not yet paid their dues, you will be receiving a letter soon.

If you wish, you may pay now by sending a check made payable to The Friends of Mountwood Park for \$20 (self) or \$25 (family). If you include a donation, please let us know how you wish your donation to be spent. For example, Easter Egg Hunt, Adventure Camp, Woof Fest, Museum/History, or Dog Park, etc. Mail your check to:

The Friends of Mountwood Park  
P. O. Box 2094  
Parkersburg, West Virginia 26102

*I have noticed even people  
who claim everything is  
predestined, and that we do  
nothing to change it, look  
before they cross the road.*

*Stephen Hawking*

## Friends & Family

**By Mike Naylor**



**Junior McCartney, Iris McCartney, Donna Curran & Ed Curran**

In November 2025, we were excited to show the Volcano museum to four visitors that are part of our Friends family. Although Donna and Ed Curran live out of state, they have been members of Friends for 10+ years and we have exchanged pleasantries via email. This visit to the museum was their first!

Donna is the daughter of Iris and French “Junior” McCartney.

Junior and Iris have been members of Friends for nearly 20 years and have made significant contributions through the years. Iris has written articles for the newsletter and volunteered at the museum. Junior has helped with clean ups at Thornhill and joined Iris at the museum.

It was a fun day at the museum visiting with Iris, Junior, Donna, and Ed. They are very pleasant and kind. Sometimes, there is no form of communication that works as well as face to face!!

*Gratitude turns what I have  
into enough, and more. It  
turns denial into  
acceptance, chaos to order,  
confusion to clarity.*

*By Melody Beattie*

## **Museum Summary**

**By Mike Naylor**

The museum had 1,923 visitors in 2025! This can be attributed to the completion of the new room and numerous new displays.

Following are the more significant displays that were added.

- The diorama planned and constructed by Jimmie Bee is the centerpiece! It is a 3D view of

Volcano surpassing all expectations. I never thought this dream would become a reality.

- A document cabinet found by Dina Braniff provides a safe place to display old documents. When the cabinet arrived, Rose Russell, Bill Butler, and Dina Braniff went to work cleaning and stocking the cabinet with Volcano documents. The cabinet was financed by a grant from the Parkersburg Area Community Foundation/
- A silver pitcher given to the Volcano Cornet Band by R. A. Silcott a Volcano hotelier. The pitcher was purchased and then donated by Dina Braniff.
- An original New York Times article with an article covering the Volcano Fire of 1879. This was purchased and donated by Dina Braniff.
- A video of Volcano’s citizens is available for the public to view.
- The “black and gold” T shirt suggested by Kyra Scadden has been a huge success. It out sold all other T shirt colors.
- The Piersol family donated an engine house complete with tools. After the Park restores the engine house, it will be secured and

erected across the creek, beside the museum.

- An engine house was built by the Park to the left of the wheel house. It houses a working “hit and miss” engine that once pumped oil in Volcano!

The following individuals deserve a huge THANK YOU for volunteering at the museum: Jimmy Bee, Dina Braniff, Tina Hescht, Carolyn Naylor, Mike Naylor, Rose Russell, Kyra Scadden, Peggy Squires, and Dawn Sturdevant.

Without active volunteers the museum would be little more than a warehouse.

*I am the wisest man alive,  
for I know one thing, and  
that is that I know nothing.*  
*By Socrates*

## **Volunteers Wanted!**

**By Carolyn Naylor**

What would happen if there were not any volunteers? Absolutely nothing! If you wonder why, the answer is quite simple. Without volunteers, all activities would cease to exist.

Thanks to volunteers, you have the Volcano Museum at Mountwood Park to visit as often as you wish. And you can visit for free!

Without volunteers, no one would be available to have our annual Easter Egg

Hunt, Woof Fest Festival, and Adventure Camp. Volunteers show up at the Park to help with events such as, Volcano Days and the Mountwood Youth Fishing Derby.

The Park hosts volunteer events focusing on removing common invasive plants such as Autumn Olive, Japanese Honeysuckle, Garlic Mustard, Japanese Stillgrass, and Multiflora Rose. This is important because plants are considered invasive when their introduction to an ecosystem is likely to cause harm to human, animal, or native plant health.

If you want more information about volunteering at the Park, contact Peggy Squires at 304-679-3914 or Mike Naylor at 304-485-5365. If you prefer, contact the Park at 304-679-3611.

In every community, volunteers are important assets. So, why not consider volunteering. If you do not feel motivated to volunteer at the Park, look around and you should be able to find something you wish to experience as part of your life.

*I think computer viruses  
should count as life. I think  
it says something about  
human nature that the only  
form of life we have created  
so far is purely destructive.  
We've created life in our own  
image.      Stephen Hawking*

## Keepers of Morality of the Wood County Men

By Carolyn Naylor

The article below shows the concern the Wood County citizens had for the morality of its men.

### *THE PARKERSBURG EXAMINER, PARKERSBURG, VA., SATURDAY DECEMBER 6, 1873 -- THE SOCIAL EVIL*

“The trial of the women indicted for keeping houses of ill fame, in the County Court last week, has renewed the discussion of the best mode of suppressing the evil. That it has become a crying sin, a wide-spread, growing evil in our city can no longer be doubted.

We have been informed by those who profess to know, that there are at least three or four hundred women in our city following the occupation of harlots. We do not think there are more than one-fourth that number; yet there are entirely too many for the well-being and prosperity of our city. In fact, there is no vice which produces such wide-spread ruin, such lasting evil, as this.

We know that this is a delicate subject, one that the American people are very shy of mentioning, much less discussing. But this very reluctance to deal with the subject has undoubtedly contributed much to the increase of the formidable evil, and until the matter is duly considered, there is but little hope of relief. In Europe, the philosopher and statesman have been more-bold in their discussion of the subject, and some little has been done to mitigate the horrors of the hydra-headed monster.

Of the numerous plans proposed for the suppression of the evil, only two are, in our opinion, worthy of consideration, viz.: Moral Suasion, which aims at the reformation of the poor outcast; and the License System, which seeks to protect society against the terrible diseases incident to it; but neither of these, in our opinion, adequate to the evil. In spite of the earnest and zealous labors of the Moonlight Missions and of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, there are more bad women in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other cities of the United States than there are in Europe. This undoubtedly is owing to the great freedom allowed young girls and women in this country, as well as to the temptation of fine dress. The inordinate desire to make a display in fine clothes has ruined thousands of vain, giddy girls, and brought them to dishonored graves.

We do not believe with St. Augustine and many other eminent divines and physicians, that the evil is a necessary incident to civilization, and must be tolerated. Such an idea is horrible—revolting to every instinct of our natures and our notions of a Divine Providence.

The evil exists simply because it is tolerated, if not openly recognized, by the laws and customs of the country. In all our large cities, as well as our own, we see the brothel on the great thoroughfares or prominent streets, side by side with the dwellings of respectable citizens; while their interior arrangement, furniture, etc. will compare favorably with the best mansions in the place. It is a fact that even in our own city, these houses are to be found upon the most frequented streets, and in the vicinity of the dwellings of respectable people. These vestibules of hell are generally owned by persons claiming to be respectable; nay, many of them were built for the express purpose of accommodating keepers of brothels, and are fitted up with all the extra appliances thought requisite to carrying on the business. Some of the owners of these houses thus occupied are members, we believe, of the christian (sic) church. Almost all of these houses are furnished better than a majority of the houses of laboring men. Many of them rival in splendor the sumptuousness and luxury of the wealthy. It is these temptations which attract and seduce the young and idle of both sexes. So long as young men and women can find such places where they can, with impunity, indulge the gratification of their lusts without labor, so long will society be cursed with the horrors of the “social evil.”

I find it interesting that the plans proposed did not include finding a way to stop the men from frequenting the places. It also did not include any suggestions about what work a woman could do to earn a living wage. Since wages in occupations considered respectable for women were so low, the only acceptable means for a woman to attain wealth was through a rich husband. Since the nineteenth century granted few or no property rights to married women, even women who married well owned little or nothing of their own.

What happened in Volcano and Wood County happened often in boom towns. The people who filled these towns were mostly male since the work was brutal and physically backbreaking. Most of the men were without families, land, or property. Those who were married, left their families back home. They knew their new life would be unfit for their wife and children. Since they did not have a stake in the community, conditions were right to attract people who cared little for restrictions.

Some women (considered bad girls) who understood something about supply and demand would appear in the boom towns. These women chose prostitution. Demand was enormous and constant. The pool of available labor was kept relatively small by the great number of women who feared the stigma attached to prostitution. But women who chose to be “bad” could live well on their own. Prostitutes who rose in the industry to become madams, had more wealth than other women in the United States.



*When you're 20, you care  
what everybody thinks, when  
you're 40 you stop caring  
what everybody thinks, when  
you're 60, you realize no one  
was ever thinking about you  
in the first place.*

*Winston Churchill, former  
prime minister of the UK*

### **Where is the Volcano!**

**By Mike Naylor**

The title of this article is one of the most frequently asked questions from those visiting the museum. Although there was never a volcano near Volcano, the moniker follows an indirect logic.

General S. D. Karns, veteran of the Civil War, geologist, and oil company executive was responsible for encouraging W. C. Stiles, Jr. to search for oil at the White Oak region of Wood County.



General S. D. Karns

Mr. Stiles heeded General Karns' advice and purchased 2,000 acres at the White Oak region. 1865 witnessed the end of the Civil War and the eruption of oil production at White Oak.

There was a frenzy to drill wells and very quickly the virgin forests on the steep hills were clear cut to provide lumber for getting at the oil.

Oil was being produced "24/7" and lighting at the well site was provided by the "yellow dog" lamps.



Yellow Dog Lamp

General Karns visited Volcano and described the appearance of so many burning yellow dog lamps on the steep hill sides as a volcano. White Oak then became Volcano, West Virginia.

*She gave me a bunch of crap  
about me not listening to  
her, or something. I don't  
know, I wasn't really paying  
attention.*

*Harry Dunn, "Dumb and  
Dumber"*

## **Volcano Lubricator October 7, 1873**

We wish to notify our young gentlemen who take prostitutes to church and stand on the porch while the soiled doves walk in. We are after the name of a young woman who took occasion to advertise herself at the church on Sunday and are sure to get it and will make the fur fly.



Volcano Store, August 8, 1905

## **Mountwood Park Meetings**

**Friends of Mountwood Park** meetings are usually the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 1:00 pm at the Stiles Administration Building. If you are unsure about the time and place, please check our Facebook page. If you are a member and if we have your current email address, you should receive a meeting notice. If you have any questions, please call or text Peggy Squires at 304-588-9148.

**Wood County Parks and Recreation Board (Mountwood Park)** meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month, 6 pm, at the Stiles Administration Building.

Editor: Carolyn Naylor

Contributors: Carolyn Naylor, Mike Naylor, and Peggy Squires

Proof Reader: Rose Russell

**Please share this newsletter with a friend.**