

'Good old days' were anything but a century ago

The coming of the new year of 2018 brings with it our usual reflections back on 2017, as well as projections ahead for 2018.

Many will long for "the good old days" after doing so. But were those old days really so good?

A century ago, our ancestors would have probably said no. As detailed below, the world was simultaneously being ravaged by a world war and a pandemic.

The year of 1917 had seen the United States enter what was then known as the Great War despite President Woodrow Wilson being re-elected on the slogan "he kept us out of war." Wilson assured the nation that this was a war "to make the world safe for democracy" and "the war to end all wars." It would prove to do neither, causing it to be renamed World War I.

The fighting during 1917-18 continued to be brutal,



with major battles such as the Somme, Second Marne and Meuse-Argonne. American troops became even more involved at battles such as Belleau Wood, Chateau-Thierry and St. Mikael, and would swing the tide of war to allied victory. That more than compensated the allies for the withdrawal of Russia from the war after that nation's Communist-led revolution.

As 1918 progressed, American and other Allied forces would become more involved in the civil war that

broke out in Russia between Communists and moderates. American boots would be on the frozen ground of Archangel and Vladivostok in an unsuccessful attempt to defeat Vladimir Lenin's Communists.

Much more success was had in the Middle East, where British and French forces and their Arab allies took control of much of the Turkish Empire. Sadly, the British and French would simultaneously create artificial nations for political and economic convenience,

ignoring regional cultural history and frustrating Arab nationalism, sowing the seeds of Middle Eastern conflict still existing today.

In 1917, Wilson had announced his idealistic Fourteen Points to assure a just and lasting peace in Europe, a "peace with victory." By the end of 1918, Wilson's plan would be a failure and the Allies would impose such a harsh peace on Germany that the seeds of more conflict were sown, this time in the form of World War II.

About 20 million people worldwide died in World War I. The flu pandemic of 1917-20 would kill at least twice that many, perhaps many more. Known as the Spanish Flu because it first came to public notice in Spain (the Allies first tried to cover up its initial outbreak in France for morale reasons), it rapidly spread worldwide. It decimated all nations and people of all

ages, both sexes and every economic class. It was to prove in many ways more terrifying than the war, with its then-unknown cause and impact on civilians.

The other events of 1917 seemed minor in comparison. Albert Einstein published his Theory of Relativity, the Balfour Declaration promised Jews a homeland in Palestine, and Congress passed Prohibition. In any other year, those would have been headline events.

In 1918, women would be enfranchised, Daylight Saving Time would be established, composer Leonard Bernstein would be born, as would the twin sisters Ester and Paulina Friedman, later known as Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren.

Of course, the Great War would end, but not before the aforementioned terrible battles. Most terribly, it would neither end all wars nor make the world safe for

democracy.

Two final ironic events were to come in 1918: German air ace Manfred von Richthofen, "the Red Baron," would be shot down and killed, and Gavrilo Princip, the Serbian nationalist whose assassination of Austro-Hungarian heir to the throne Franz Ferdinand started the war, would die in prison.

So when thoughts of politics, international affairs or economics trouble you, think about what your relatives a century ago were enduring and be of good cheer as you contemplate the new year.

A retired history teacher, school administrator and university professor, R.E. Heinly writes this column weekly on the Victorian Era, highlighting its foibles and fascination. He is the author of the book "Victorian Cape May."

Problems

Continued from Page A1

are that the air conditioning units on the roof were not coated when installed. The aluminum coils and saltwater do not mix, as one living at the shore knows," Elwell said. "Oxidation occurs rapidly."

A real concern is if the air conditioning units on the roof must be replaced, it would require the use of a crane and could incur a great expense, he said.

"If the air conditioning units must be replaced, we would strongly recommend the new units be coated to prevent oxidation of the coils," Elwell said.

The committee has determined Convention Hall requires an expert on heating, ventilation and air conditioning capable of identifying current problems and recommending solutions with the systems. Elwell said a consultant could provide costs and a timeline to the city manager as soon as possible.

City Manager Neil Young said he spoke with city engineer Tom Thornton, of Mott MacDonald, about the air conditioning problems. Mott MacDonald has mechanical engineers on staff, Young said.

"With council's approval, he'll definitely submit a proposal to evaluate these things," Young said.

Elwell said the committee discussed hiring an independent consultant with no connection to the city. Young said Mott MacDonald did not work on the construction of Convention Hall.

"It also appears a full-time city employee is needed who would have a job description to oversee maintenance for Convention Hall," Elwell said. "This could be an operations manager whose job could be to include overseeing the mechanical maintenance on the HVAC system and include the nuts and bolts of operation, set ups and tear downs and so forth."

Elwell said he received a note from City Marketing Director Laurie Taylor stating an utmost priority for Convention Hall is a need for a generator. The building has experienced power outages caused by external factors such as a squirrel on a transformer, car accidents and severe weather, she stated.

Power outages have occurred on numerous occasions, even during two concerts. Elwell said Taylor stated she feared an extended outage during a concert or wedding would leave the city liable for all lost money, which could total thousands of dollars.

Elwell said black mold, found in the performer's dressing room, seems to be under control. He said some of the wall had been torn off and new sheet rock installed.

"The cause of the black mold was likely two-fold," he said. "One was the wind-driven rain leaking through the soffit and two, the room had no windows for ventilation."

The combination of the two provides a favorable environment for mold to grow, he said. The committee is recommending Convention Hall be assessed for weather-tightness and proper ventilation.

Deputy Mayor Shaine Meier said he had heard

from Convention Hall staff that the brand of the air conditioning system was not well known.

"I also heard part of the mold problem might have something to do with there is no drip pan for any condensation," he said.

The committee discussed some easy solutions to problems with the hall, such as installing shades on tall windows on the southwest corner of the building.

"This would reduce the hothouse effect, which makes it almost impossible for the air conditioning to get the temperature down to a comfortable level, according to a city employee," Elwell said. "This would also be energy savings and the AC system would not have to be strained to capacity."

Elwell said hairline cracks are starting to appear around the walkway of the building near the front steps.

"For such a young

building, these cracks should not be appearing and should be surveilled," he said. "If rainwater gets into the cracks and freezes, this will become a problem."

Vinyl flooring is loose and coming off the concrete floor near a storage room, he said. Elwell said a simple fix to reduce a workplace hazard would be take it up and replace it with epoxy flooring, a type often used in firehouses and usually guaranteed up to 50 years.

Convention Hall was constructed at a cost of \$10.5 million and opened Memorial Day weekend 2012.

The city filed lawsuits in 2016 against the firms responsible for designing and constructing it but no court dates have been set. The mechanical room of the building, which was built below flood stage at a height of 8.5 feet, houses the hall's fire suppression system and a sump pump.

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Other Side

Continued from Page A6

now old and leaky, never made it across the lake and she and her crew of 20 were never heard from again. When thousands of Christmas Trees began washing up on shore, her fate became known.

Today, the tradition of Chicago's Christmas Tree ship is carried on by the Coast Guard icebreaker / buoy tender the Mackinaw.

Early every December, the "Mack" docks at Chicago's Navy Pier loaded with almost 2,000 Christmas Trees. These trees are donated by local non-profits, associations, scouting troops, members of the marine community and private individuals for the city's needy families. Every year, the story of the Chicago Christmas ship is told and retold in legend, song and on stage. It is a legend

with a common theme as told in many ports around the world....including right here, on Cape May's Other Side.

Mark Allen promotes and markets fishing tournaments for South Jersey Marina, edits "On the Rips" magazine and is a retired lieutenant colonel with 27 years flying experience with the U.S. Marines and Air Force National Guard.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWNSHIP OF LOWER SMALL CITIES PROGRAM

The Township of Lower is completing a Small Cities Community Development Block Grant. Small Cities Project #2016-02292-0156-00 in the amount of \$150,000 is being used to provide home rehabilitation loans to low and moderate income households in Lower Township.

In accordance with Community Development Citizen Participation requirements, a public hearing is being held in order to review the performance and status of activities and to identify future Community Development activities for the Small Cities Program. This second hearing is in addition to the public hearings that were held during development of this project prior to submission of the Small Cities application.

Interested citizens are invited to attend this hearing on January 3, 2018 at 2:00 PM at the Lower Township Municipal Building, 2600 Bayshore Road, Villas, New Jersey 08251. All citizens are encouraged to offer comments at the public hearing or by writing to Lower Township Grants Office, 2600 Bayshore Road, Villas, NJ 08251, ATTN: Colleen Crippen, within ten days following the public hearing. Written comments may also be sent to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Small Cities Unit, PO Box 806, New Jersey 08625-0806, ATTN: Administrator.

Financial assistance for this activity is made possible by a grant from the: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program

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Glass Bottles (green/brown/clear)

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Do Not Recycle

The Following Items are NOT ACCEPTED for Recycling Collection and must be Placed in Trash.

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WE DO NOT PICK UP BRANCHES. TAKE BRANCHES TO RECYCLE YARD. CHRISTMAS TREES PICKED UP AT CURB WITHOUT DECORATIONS UNTIL JANUARY 31, 2018

Yard Open Mon.-Fri. 7:30am - 3:15 & Sat. 8am-noon-closed Wed.

Please Remember ...

All Cape May City properties are entitled to a once a week curbside pickup of recycling.

- This includes: Bottles, Cans, Plastic and Glass Jars, Newspapers, Corrugated Cardboard, Office Paper, Junk Mail and Magazines
- Please do **NOT** use plastic bags for anything.
- Recycling will **NOT** be picked up if it contains any type of contaminant



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Labels for Recycling Containers are available on request or can be picked up at City Hall or Recycling Office located at the Public Works Complex on Canning House

Any questions call the Cape May City Recycling Office at 609-884-9570