

THE CARD – Vol. 17, No. 9 Issue 201 September 2006

Monthly Publication of the Lancaster County Postcard Club, Lancaster, PA.

Next Meeting: Mon., September 18, 2006. Farm & Home Center. Buy, sell, trade from 5:30. Meeting at 7pm.

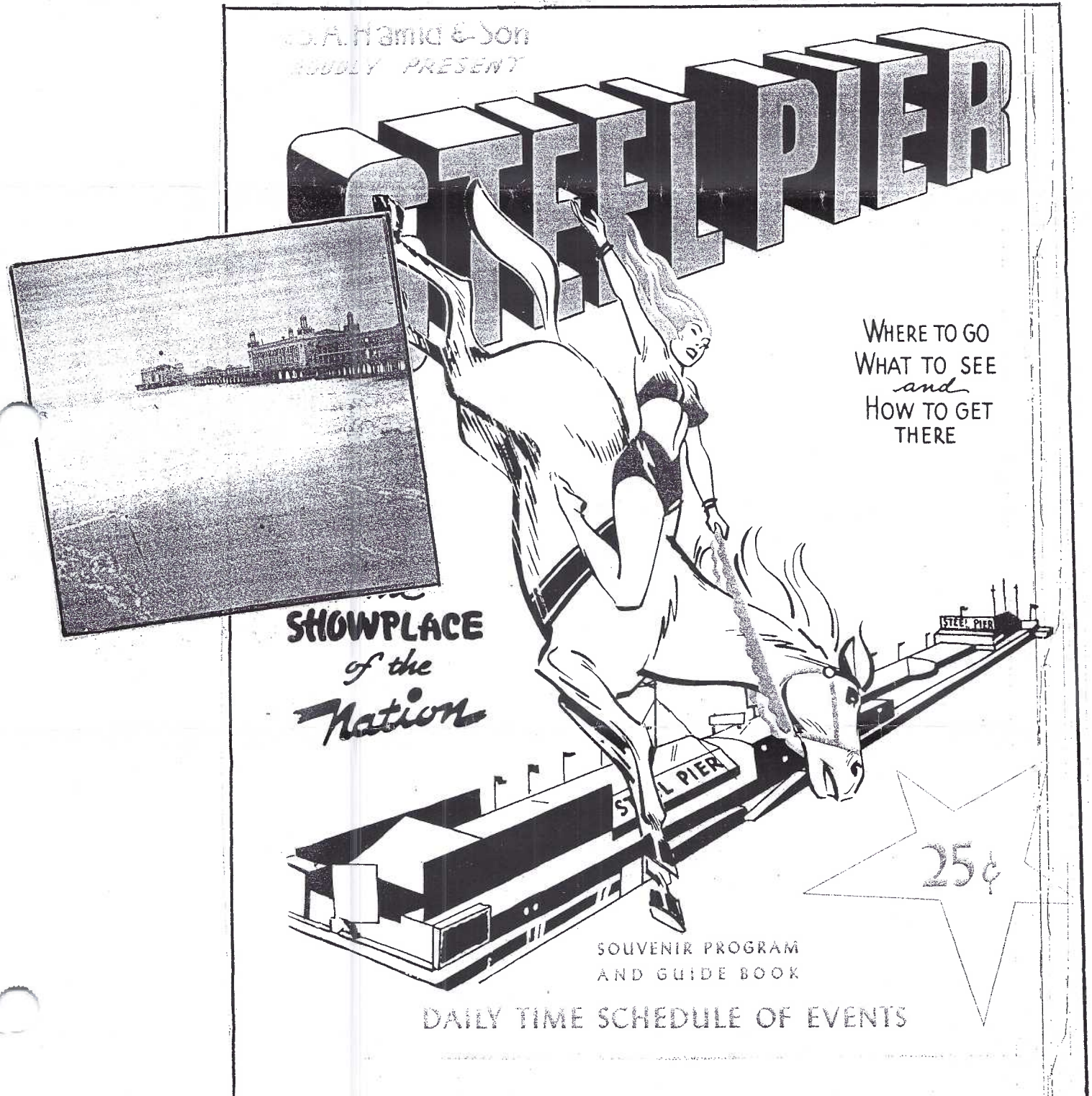
Yearly membership is \$10 (\$5 for each additional member at the same address.)

Membership chair: Betty Beck 11 Cinder Hill Rd. Lititz, PA 17543

Club/editors address: LCPC c/o Bryan Benner 127 E. Clay St. Lancaster, PA 17602

Club website: www.playle.com/clubs/lanaster or Google search: Lancaster County Postcard Club

Atlantic City's Diving Horses

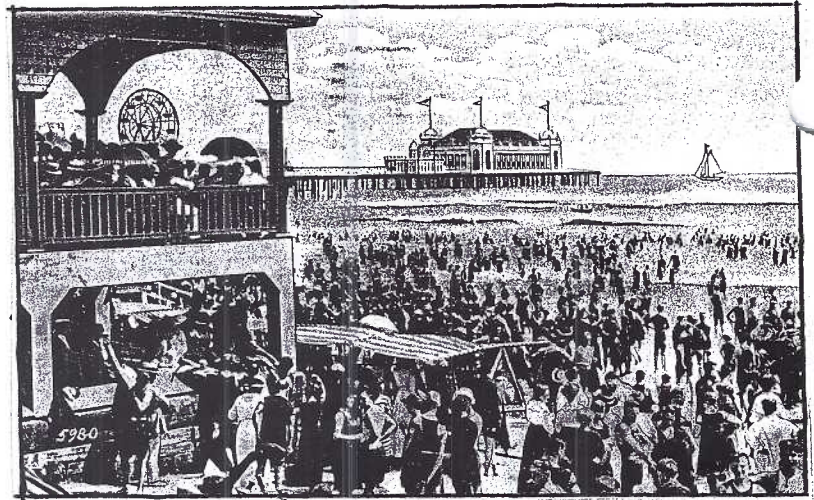


Cover of Steel Pier program from the mid 1950's featuring the diving horse act.

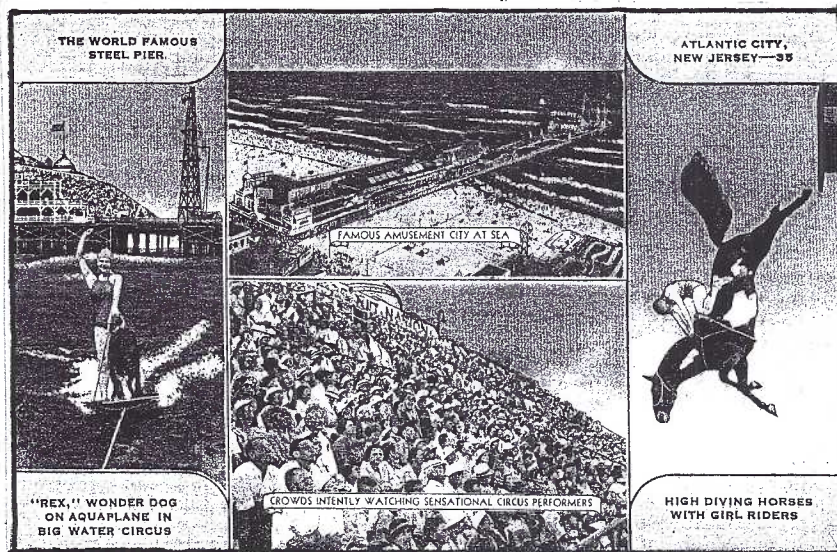
Atlantic City's Diving Horses

By Bryan Benner

Diving horses began according to legend when Dr. William Carver was out on his favorite horse one night and the bridge they were crossing collapsed sending them both into the river. The horse apparently executed a well balanced 'dive' and both swam safely to shore. Dr. Carver was an exhibition sharp shooter already and got the idea that training diving horses to dive would be a good addition to his act. Daughter Lorena was his first rider, as Deadeye Doc launched his diving horses at state and county fairs across the country. He died, however, before the act came to Atlantic City and its prime venue.



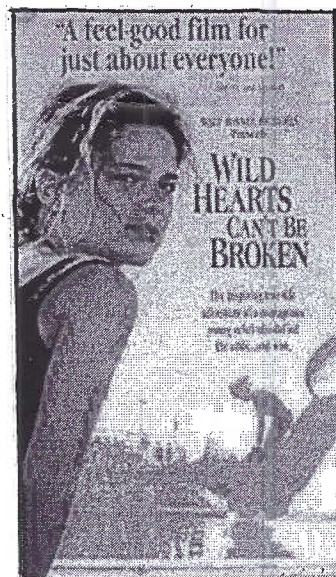
Above: "A Glimpse of the Beach and Ball Room, End of Steel Pier in Distance, Atlantic City, N.J." is how the caption reads on this postmarked 1917 postcard, pub. By P. Sander, Philadelphia and Atlantic City (Pier is shorter than earlier real photo card on cover?)



Left: Multi-view linen postcard, postmarked 1949, showing some of the Steel Pier attractions.

Sonora was tragically blinded by a bad dive that detached her retinas. Incredibly, she continued to dive and work in the show for another ten years after being blinded. She wrote a memoir in 1961 titled 'A Girl and Five Brave Horses', which was made into the Disney movie 'Wild Hearts Can't be Broken', about her and the diving horses. She died in 2003 at the age of 99.

The diving horse act was presented at the famous Steel Pier which opened in 1898, and was built by the Quakers originally as a private resort. However it was soon open to the public, as "the handsomest and most luxuriously appointed pier in the world". Later it was owned by the Hamid family, who continued the diving horses. The venue's most fondly remembered act began in the 1920's by Al Carver, Dr. Carver's son. His wife Sonora Webster Carver was one of the original riders and was certainly the most famous. Al rode the horses himself but it was Sonora that made a female rider a traditional part of the thrilling show. They rode the horses off towers as high as sixty feet tall into specially built tanks of water. The horse would run up a ramp to the brink of the tower with the water tank below and just before it would jump the rider would mount the horse. The horses that would do the diving liked to jump all those involved in the show said, though I doubt animal protection societies would allow it today.



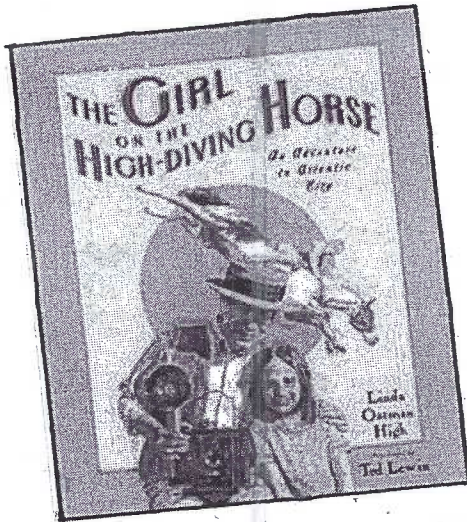
Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken (1991)

Starring: Gabrielle Anwar, Michael Schoeffling **Director:** Steve Miner **Rating** G

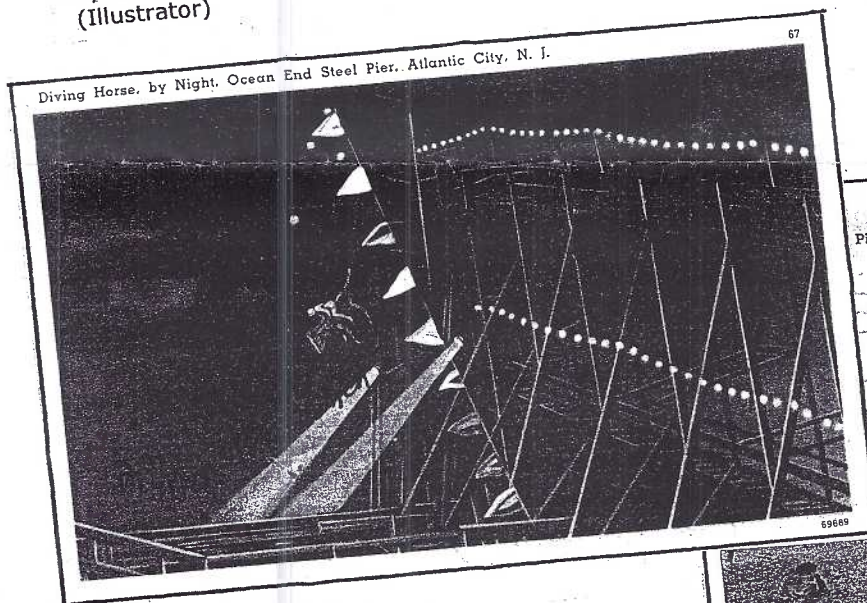
If you've never seen this film it's a fan friendly touching story.

Atlantic City Cont.

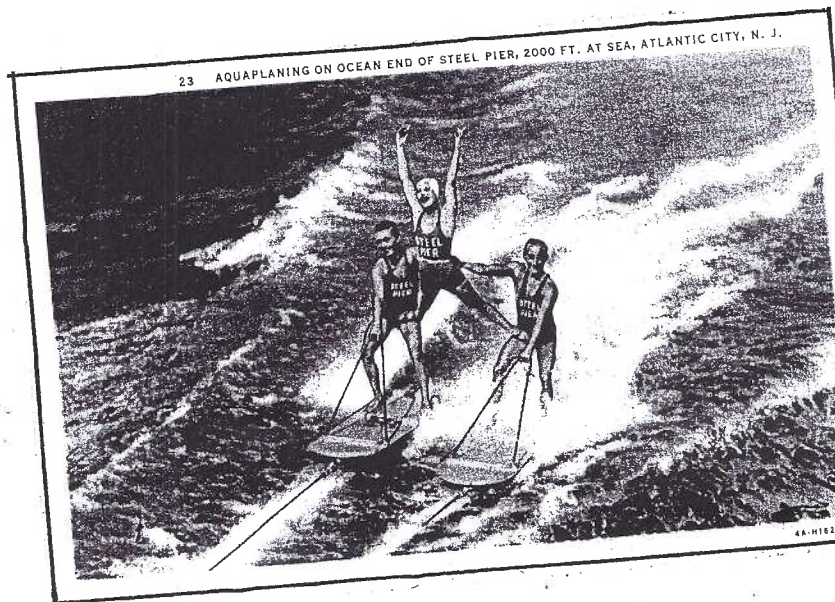
Sonora's sister Arnette Webster French was also a diving rider and she performed from 1929 until 1941. Amazingly she wanted to dive like her sister even after Sonora's blindness, and was just 16 years old when she began diving. Arnette loved to dive with the horse John the Baptist a white coated horse that did a corkscrew dive. He also would lie in the water so that you thought he was drowning and then he would fly out of the pool. Recently a children's book was written about her called 'The Girl on the High-Diving Horse' it was written by Linda Oatman High and is very nicely illustrated by Ted Lewin.



The Girl on the High Diving Horse (Hardcover)
by Linda Oatman High, Ted Lewin (Illustrator)



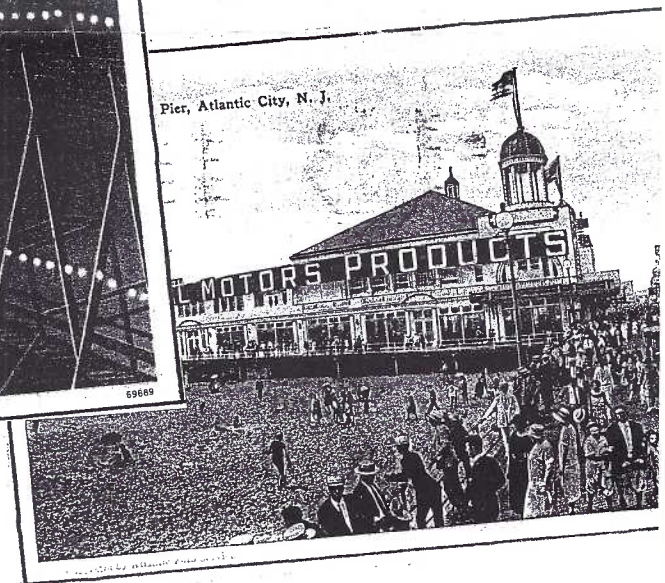
left: Linen night postcard, postmarked 1945, Tichnor Quality View, signed by Arnette Webster French above the top light beam.

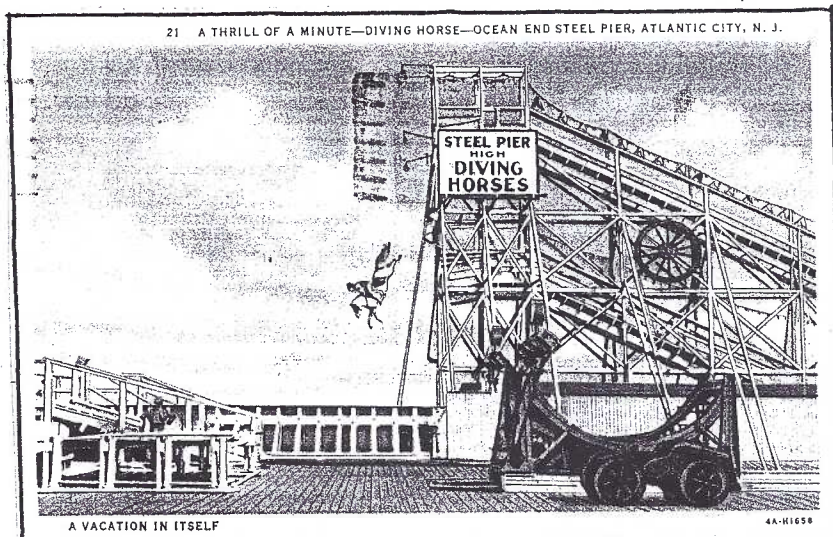


Above: Linen postcard, postmarked 1937, Curt Teich & Co., View of water skiing act.

Arnette also performed in many of the other water acts that were done at the pier and her husband (who she met at the pier and the boat for her water skiing act. She water-skied aboard an "aquaplane" with Rex the Wonder Dog. Photos of her performing in these acts appeared in *Life* and *Look* magazines. She and her husband were big collectors and later in life collected and sold postcards!

Below right: White border postcard, post 1929, Pub. By Sithers Postcard Co., show boardwalk end of Pier, General Motors I exhibited for many years on the Pier.





Above: Linen postcard, postmarked 1944, Curteich, caption reads "The Steel Pier Diving Horses have been a feature of the Steel Pier for years. Never coaxed, driven or urged these horses dive of their own free will."

Atlantic City was America's play land in its day and a huge number of postcards from Atlantic City can be found. There are many Steel Pier postcards of course, but there are also specific diving horse cards out there too! These cards were sometimes autographed by the girls that dived the horses as a special souvenir of their show. Even though it is difficult to reproduce because it is a night scene, I included a card signed by Arnette as an illustration for this article. She died in 2000 at the age of 87.

There are many people who have fond recollections of the diving horses and many other shows that were done on the Steel Pier. There were sideshow acts such as Mr. Johnson's Boxing Cats; Elsie the Cow and her son Beauregard, and Captain Kelly and his sea lions. Some of the diving horses were favorites like Dimah, named after Steel Pier owner Mr. Hamid, but spelled backwards. Dimah was a jet-black filly who was known for her theatrical pause before she jumped. The water show often ended with the Diving Jackasses act which was two men dressed in old-fashioned bathing suits who claimed to dive better than Dimah and would do clownish dives.

The Diving Horses ceased in 1976 when the Steel Pier was bought by Resorts International, and was shut down. In 1993 the pier was reopened with 24 amusement rides but from what I understand the pier which now is across from Trumps Taj Mahal Casino on the corner of Boardwalk and Virginia Ave. is slated for other uses.

Library Highlight

PHILADELPHIA IN PICTURE **POSTCARDS 1900-1930** by Philip Jamison, III

For 300 years Philadelphia has been, and continues to be, a unique combination of history, charm, and remarkable consistency. Consequently, this beautiful city presents both pictorial connections with the past and a large still-standing collection of original buildings, grounds, streets, and neighborhoods. The pictorial connections are seen not only in museums and institutions but also in innumerable private collections.

The author presents a pictorial collection of Philadelphia's past in an informative and entertaining fashion. The book is also a factual representation of history made up principally with postcards collected by the author. Organized by chronology and subject matter, it can be used as an important addition to Philadelphia's history or as a nostalgic tour through the city.

This book is a delightful stroll down memory lane for anyone who grew up in Philadelphia and remembers the scenes themselves or remembers hearing their parents discussing them. But more importantly, it enables younger Philadelphians to learn about their city in an enjoyable way.

If you are interested in borrowing this excellent book, please call Carol Giona.



Above: "Broad Street looking north from Spruce, Philadelphia" is how this Imperial, postmarked 1910 card reads.

CLUB PAGE

By Dick Pendergrast



SEPTEMBER MEETING

Paul Petersen of Lancaster will present a program on World War I postcards. Paul has always been a military history enthusiast. His wife Carol collects postcards and one day she picked up a few World War I cards for him and he has been hooked on them ever since.

Paul works at Lancaster General Hospital Health Campus and covers the continuing education for the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department and their other clinics.

The monthly competition will be a single card subject "Schools"

NEW MEMBERS

- # 760 **KEN WILSON** (Correction – Town should be Dipping Springs, Texas)
- # 761 **TINA SKINNER**, 4880 Lower Valley Road, Atglen, Pa. 19310-9717, Tel 610-593-1777, tinas@schifferbooks.com. Dealer
- # 518 **HAROLD BURTON**, 153 SUMMIT Avenue, Eagleville, Pa. 19403, Tel 610-539-9448, gracetb@comcast.net. Dealer reinstated.

(Photo Credits – from the Left)

Illustrated Postal Card Company, Artist Archie Gunn

Unknown, published in Italy

Illustrated Postal Card Company, Artist Wall

CLUB PAGE

by Dick Pendergrast

POSTCARD SHOW AUGUST 19

Some 270 people attended the 2006 show in the newly renovated Farm & Home Center. The show room even boasts chandeliers on the ceiling now. Winners of the postcard competition were:

BEST OF SHOW – Dolores Rowe The Lure of Advertising
PEOPLE'S CHOICE – Dolores Rowe Off The Beaten Track at Atglen, Pa

WHO

1 st	Dolores Rowe	Ray Jerome Baker's People of Hawaii
2 nd	Donald Brown	An American Indian Sampler
3 rd	Jim Ward	Christmas Children

TRAINS & TROLLEYS

1 ST	Bud Heim	Some Trolley Scenes of Lanc. Co.
2 nd	Dick Pendergrast	Summer Trolleys
3 rd	Dolores Rowe	Do These Towns Still Have Trains & Trolley Service

WHERE

1 st	Dolores Rowe	Off The Beaten Path at Atglen Pa.
2 nd	Ruth Moyer	Denver Pa.
3 rd	Bud Heim	Holtwood (2 boards)

LINENS

1 st	Donald Brown	Accessories for the Man of 1941
2 nd	Dolores Rowe	The Lure of Advertising Linens
3 rd	Jim Ward	Pre-Jet Airports

Thanks to the above who entered boards plus Robert Kramer, Harold Moyer, Barbara Heim, Joe Myers and Cheryl and Richard Edwards and to our judges John Klein, Kay Feight, Deb Wilson and Dale Biesecker

CLUB PICNIC AUGUST 20

(by Jim Ward, Host)

With predicted high humidity, high temperatures and scheduled vacations just twenty-seven club members and their guests attended the annual picnic. An occasional breeze kept everyone contented – some bird-watched from under the trees, others found postcards to suit their needs. There were five tables of cards at one end of the shed while the opposite end included an array of hot and cold foods, door prizes and a multitude of white elephant items for the auction for which we thank the donors of the new and used items that netted LCPC \$50.25.

Present were: Mary Darrenkamp, Shirley Summers, Joe Myers, Ray Bubb, Gisela Withers, Doug Milliken, Ellen and Al Crawford, Doris and Dick Pendergrast, Barbara and Bud Heim, Jim and Jean Bordt, Maria and Win Schurz, Ruth and Harold Moyer, Cheryl and Richard Edwards from Maryland, Ove Braskerud, Ralph Edson, Aida and Jose Rodriguez all from Connecticut and, of course, our social committee, Carol and Ray Dennis with their delicious lemonade/ice tea.

The competition was a single card, subject "Summer Recreation" Winners were:

1 st	Ellen Crawford	Camping in the Summer
2 nd	Harold Moyer	Fishing
3 rd	Maria Schurz	Girl Crossing

Also thanks to exhibitors Cheryl Edwards, Ruth Moyer, Dick Pendergrast and Jim Ward