



The East Providence Historical Society

Gazette

Summer 2016

Volume XXVIII No. 6

Dedicated to Preserving the Heritage and Enjoying the History of Our City

— May —

Monday, May 23
7:00 pm

Members' Meeting -
Public invited

"Laff in the Dark":
The Spooky Spaces of
Crescent Park

Brookdale East Bay
1440 Wampanoag Trail
East Providence, RI

— June —

Saturday, June 4
9:00 am - Noon

National Trails Day
Hunt House Museum open

Sunday, June 26
11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Arts Festival
at Hunt's Mills

Monday, June 27
6:00 pm

Picnic and Elections
Hunt House lawn

CONTACT US AT:

East Providence
Historical Society
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI
02916-4774
Tel. (401) 438-1750
Email: info@ephist.org
Web Site: ephist.org

President's Letter

By Nancy Moore

It has been a very busy winter and spring for the EPHS Board. While researching for the RISCA and Champlin grants these past months, I came across the note that a small group of folks met in Rumford in February 1966 to talk about the formation of a historical society. I didn't find much more about that group but we do know that the EP Historical Society was incorporated in April 1967. So, assuming that this group met through the fall and winter of 66-67 to prepare the application, we have determined that next September will be the kick off month for our 50th year. Some beautiful T-shirts are in the process of being designed and you can be one of the first to proudly sport one if you come by the Hunt House for the June 26th Arts Festival.

Thank you all for supporting the "Ring of the Green" bus tours. They were a huge success and we had over 150 people visit Hunt Mills that day (more if you count the anglers since trout were stocked in the 10 Mile for the first time in a long while). The 10 Mile River Group, the EP Conservation Commission, and RI Fish and Game were on hand to help with questions about the fish ladders and the trails. Many thanks to Ben Cote, Keith Gonsalves, Ernie Germani and their crews. This first big collaboration with the Carpenter Museum of Rehoboth was a resounding success and we look forward to working with Barbara Spencer, Lende McMullen and their group again. Special thanks go to Maggie Dooley for allowing us complete access to her beloved Daggett House (1690) and to Jean Clarke, realtor, for her sponsorship of the day here at Hunt's Mills. Please let your Board and volunteers know how much you appreciate all their work: the cleaning, the set ups, docenting, crowd control and

Reminder:

This is the summer issue which means you won't hear from us again until September. Please check carefully for picnic details and summer dates. We hope to see you all many times!

The Gazette

Is published by the
East Providence
Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI
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Web Site: ephist.org

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Cheryl Faria *1st Vice President*
Deborah Ormerod *2nd Vice President*
Stephanie Poole *Recording Secretary*
Pat Henry *Corresponding Secretary*
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Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Newsletter*
Nancy Moore *Preservation*
Nancy Moore *Programs*
Nancy Moore *Publicity*
Becky Ellis *Website Manager*

2nd SUNDAY SUMMER OPEN HOUSES

**June 12
July 10
August 14**

**The John Hunt House : 1:00 - 3:30pm
65 Hunt's Mills Road
Rumford, RI 02916**

**Mark your calendars for the special events
this season at Hunt's Mills:**

**"Keep Me Warm One Night"
An Exhibit of Antique and New Quilts**

This EPHS quilt exhibit showcases an array of antique quilts from as early as 1845. Most of these local quilts are finished but several are quilt "tops" which allows one to see the intricate piecwork. The Blackstone Valley quilt and the Crescent Park quilt have drawn many visitors already. Each 2nd Sunday also features the work of the Piecemaker Quilt Group based at the Newman Church whose talented, award winning members share their work and talk with visitors about the art of quilting. The WCTU quilt (1888-1938) has been a wonderful new addition and a new yo-yo quilt acquisition will be on display.

We can accommodate groups for special visits to this exhibit. If you know of a quilt group or other interested group please contact Nancy Moore at 438-4299.

**The East Providence
Historical Society**

is dedicated to preserving the heritage
and enjoying the history of our city.

**If you are not a member we
invite you to join now.**

Annual dues are \$15 individual, \$25
family or business, or a Life
Membership for \$150.

Please make check payable to:

East Providence Historical Society

and mail membership form to

East Providence Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774

East Providence, RI 02916-4774



Membership Form

New

Renewal/Change

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

\$15 Individual

\$25 Family/Business

\$150 Life

President's Letter – continued from page 1

care, research, photography, promotion - they do it all so well! And a special thanks to member Dave Czwonka who took it upon himself to clean the stone at the Roger Williams Spring memorial the week before the bus tour.

Your building and grant writing committees have been VERY busy this winter, fulfilling the contract designations of the RISCA matching grant and preparing a Champlin Grant which was submitted on April 28th. The requirements for the ADA compliant entry and bathroom in the RISCA grant (to which many of you have generously given matching funds) have been satisfied. The State was very pleased with the plans for a lift instead of a ramp system and has signed off on that part of the contract. The cost is more than budgeted but we have already begun to explore other funding to cover that. As this letter is being written, the crew has plans to remove all salvageable material from the Ticket Booth. Once that is done, the interior demolition will begin. As for the Champlin grant, we applied for all those little projects that, after 25 years, need to be dealt with again. The King unit in the kitchen is leaking, the bathroom needs HELP! and hot water, the chimney and foundation need re-pointing. Now that the keeping room looks so spiffy the rest of the house is asking for a facelift too. But most of all, the structural situation in the summer kitchen needs to be dealt with properly and with finality.

We will hear from Champlin in November and if we win a grant, receive money in January of 2017, at which time the Ed Center should be pretty well wrapped up. If you'd like to know more about these projects or volunteer, please call Brain Turgeon at 378-0683.

As some of you know, member John McBride died this month. Hunt House was his favorite outdoor spot as he sickened. Those of us who were at House Hunt regularly would stop and chat with John as he sat in the sun on the bench by the side door. I once asked him why he didn't sit on the new Ginny Berwick bench and he replied, "This is out of the wind. This bench is in the perfect spot." So we will miss John there. Rest in peace good friend.

Rotors Over Rumford? Will this idea "fly?"

Imagine our surprise to learn that the EPLCT Board has UNANIMOUSLY voted to sell 3 acres of land at Bridgham Farm for a helipad operation, flying commuters back and forth from RI to NYC. We are imagining the serenity of swans disturbed in the pre-dawn and the roar of the water over the dam drowned out at day's end. But what a boon for all those Rumford commuters to Providence, not just NYC!



And then we double checked the date on the posting: April 1. Could this just be a great April's Fool joke? We're betting that someone in that group has a great sense of humor - thank heaven for comprehensive plans, eh?

In Memory Of

John W. McBride, Sr.



*Sadly missed...fondly
remembered*

Notice Regarding July Dues Payments

All dues are payable in the month of July. They can be paid at the annual picnic in June, OR can be mailed in to the post office address found on page 2 of the GAZETTE. You can also download a membership application to print and mail from our website:

<http://ephist.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/membership1.pdf>

This reminder will save us considerable postage, and we will be able to spend more money on programs for you!

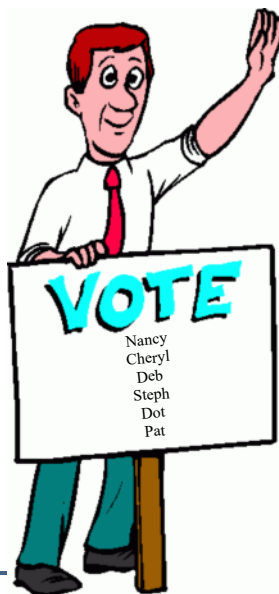
Thank you all for your continued support. We hope to see you this summer at the Hunt House for our open houses, the second Sunday of each month. If you have any questions about dues, please contact me at (401) 434-9462.

Miriam Kenney
Membership Chair

Meet Our New Members

- Jean Clarke, ReMax Rivers Edge
- Helen Christine Ellis
- Eric & Marilynn Johnson
- John & Thia Lord
- Ralph & Elaine Viara

Welcome to our group!



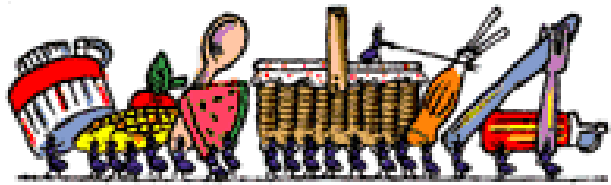
We will also have our election of officers that evening. See the slate of candidates below.

Slate of Candidates

- Co-President.....Nancy Moore
- Co-President.....Cheryl Faria
- Vice President.....Deborah Ormerod
- Recording Secretary.....Stephanie Poole
- Treasurer.....Dorothy Thornley
- Corresponding Secretary.....Pat Henry

National Trails Day Saturday June 4 9:00am - Noon

If you haven't explored Hunt's Mills yet this is the perfect day to begin. The EPHS, the 10 Mile River Watershed Alliance, the EP Conservation Commission, and the Providence County Hiking Club will be at the Mills from 9:00am to noon to introduce you to the natural wonders of the area. The trails are in great shape and guided tours will be available. Hunt House will be open!



Picnic and Elections Monday June 27th 6:00pm to dusk

After last year's very successful picnic on the Hunt House lawn, we have decided to move the event there permanently. We will be celebrating the success of the Arts Fest the day before also. Supper begins at 6:00pm but come early to enjoy the ambiance. And remember, members will not be called for food or attendance. However we would appreciate a call at 438-1750 to let us know you will be coming for a rough count. If you would like to contribute to the salads table, please feel free to do so. The variety is always welcome. As usual, the menu is hamburgers/hotdogs and strawberry shortcake. Members \$3 / guests \$6.

Arts Festival at Hunt's Mills

Sunday June 26th
11:00am - 4:00pm

Our next collaborative effort is very exciting and here on our own turf. The EP Arts Council, the Lions Club, the 10 Mile River Watershed Alliance, Greenwood Firetruck Restoration and the EP Conservation Commission have put together a very exciting day at the Mills. The day will start with the Scott Gorham Memorial Road Race from the top of the lane. From 11:00am - 4:00pm the festival opens its doors featuring 50 artisans, 13 non-profits, food trucks, music, antique fire trucks and more. There will be plenty of parking and areas for picnicking. You won't want to miss this day!

Pump House Windows: We Need You!

Keith Gonsalves of the 10 Mile group has had a splendid idea and we have been given the green light by the City to implement it. Keith has noticed that many visitors spend time craning their necks to see what might be in that gorgeous building called the Pump House. An idea struck him, "What if photos and explanations of the history were featured in the window panes for all to see and read?" So with 3 windows available, we have decided to devote one to the history of the Pump House, one to the work of the 10 Mile River group and one to the flora and fauna of the area. How can you help? These windows need to be restored: re-glazed and repainted. If you know how to do this and would like to be part of this project please call Nancy Moore at 438-4299. All materials will be provided.



The Curious Curator

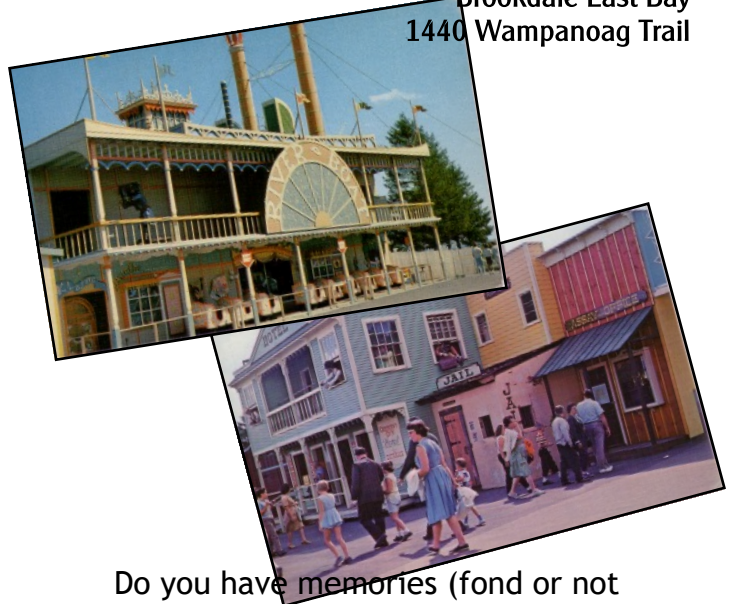
By Deb Ormerod

While cleaning, I discovered this! Any ideas what they are? Bullet casings?

Send an email with your guesses!
info@ephist.org

May Public Meeting "Laff in the Dark": The Spooky Spaces of Crescent Park

Monday May 23 - 7:00pm
Brookdale East Bay
1440 Wampanoag Trail



Do you have memories (fond or not fond) of riding the Pretzel, the Riverboat, the Hotel Fun House? Like many people, George LaCross was especially fascinated by the dark rides which transformed time and space from bright sunlight to another world just by passing through a door or climbing into a seat. Please join us for this look at how these rides were invented and built. Share your favorite hair-raising tale with us. Also, check out the website laffinthedark.com for more stories and images.



Remembering the VFW Post # 5385 and Veterans of East Providence, RI

by Mary Mello and Susan Cady



Photo credit: EP Historical Society

The building once located at 165 Lyon Ave., on the corner of Juniper St., holds special memories for many young students, veterans, and their families.

From 1897 until ~1940, this building was the William B. Ellis Primary School. There were 2 classrooms, grade 1 and 2, with 1 teacher and the principal. In 1939, Miss Mary C. Coffey was the principal. The dirt field, along Juniper St., toward Ninth Street, was the students' playground.

After the school closed, the building became the home of the Primmer-Cordeiro Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post # 5385. Mustered in 1919, comrades who served in the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps during wars, campaigns, and expeditions were its founding members. The veterans held monthly business meetings and socialized on the weekends. On special occasions (wedding, bridal and baby showers, graduation, etc.), the hall was rented for receptions. The public was invited to suppers, raffles, poppy day

sales, and on various holidays (Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Christmas, New Year's Eve) to dances with a live band or disk jockey. The Post participated in many civic events to support the veterans and their families. Members visited the Veterans' Home in Bristol and Veterans' Hospital in Providence to organize bingo games. They marched in the Riverside Memorial Day Parade and placed flags on veterans' graves in the spring and autumn.

Manuel J. Mello Jr. was the husband of Mary Mello. He worked for the East Providence School Department as a member of the maintenance and custodial team at East Providence High School from the early 1970s until his retirement in 1992. Mr. Mello was a hospital medic in the Army during the Korean Conflict. "Manny" (in the white jacket on the left of the photo below) served as a commander for the VFW Post # 5385. Each year, ceremonies were held to honor veterans at the "Garden of Flags" on Massasoit Ave. on Memorial Day and Veterans' Day.

A group, known affectionately as the "Cooties," included the spouses and families of veterans. The



Photo credit: Mrs. Mary Mello, 1971

women wore white dresses with red sashes and red and white hats. Each year the Cooties entered a float and walked in the Bristol July 4th parade. The float carried an injured veteran (sometimes, the patient was Manny) resting in a hospital bed to promote the Veterans' Hospital in Providence. In 1971, this group traveled via bus to the U. S. Capital in Washington, D.C. Mary recalls this very emotional visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and to the grave of President John F. Kennedy.

In 2003, the Primmer-Cordeiro Post # 5385 officers realized its members could not afford the building renovations needed to comply with new, strict building safety codes. The building was sold in 2004 and VFW Post meetings were held at another location. With fewer active members, this VFW Post gave up its charter in 2006. The old school building was torn down. Before 2008, the paved parking lot and building site were replaced with 4 residential houses.

Although this VFW Post is gone, other veterans' organizations still exist, as do their many tributes to our veterans throughout East Providence. Only a few are listed below.

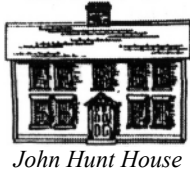
- In 1947, the gates to the Pierce Memorial Football Stadium were erected in honor of the 2125 graduates and students of the East Providence High School who served their country in World War II. The names of 76 former students who gave their lives for their country during World War II are listed on the plaque to the right of the gates at the stadium entrance. In 2015, the green copper gates and plaques were resurfaced.
- In 1949, the Barrington Parkway was renamed the East Providence Veterans' Memorial Parkway. The VFW Post # 5385 placed a plaque on the corner of Mercer St. and the parkway "in honor of the men and women of East Providence who served in all wars and in memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice for their country".
- In the late 1950s, many houses, an old convent, and 3 schools along School Street, Oakley St., and Freeborn Ave., from the Washington Bridge to

the Mass. State line, were razed to dig out Interstate 195. On Nov. 11, 1961, this route was named the "East Providence Veterans' Memorial Expressway". Each of the 5 bridges connecting the newly divided city was named in honor of 2 local veterans. The bridges are located on Potter St. for Sgt. Thomas J. McLynch and Lieut. Mark R. Gilbert, on Purchase St. for Pvt. Frank Maciel and PFC. John Webb, on Lyon Ave. for PFC. Eugene A. Fontes and 1st. Lieut. Emanuel H. Gracie, Jr., at Broadway for PFC. John Braga and Col. William Halton, and on Pawtucket Ave. for Pvt. Joseph D. Crowley and Pvt. Daniel R. Thomas.

- In 1972, the Primmer-Cordeiro VFW Post donated a flagstaff to the United Methodist Retirement Center (now Winslow Gardens) on Irving Ave.
- In 2015, the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial "Garden of the Flags" was moved from its old site on Massasoit Ave. to Squantum Woods Park. This park is located on the East Providence Veterans' Memorial Parkway between South Broadway and Pawtucket Ave.

*Share your memories of attending old schools in East Providence, the construction of I-195, being a member of or visiting the VFW Post #5385, and other veteran memorials, etc., with the EP Historical Society, and/or this historian writer Susan Cady
digsEPhistory@hotmail.com.*





East Providence Historical Society
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- To ensure daffodil flowers for next season, after flowering, only remove the flower seed head. Do not remove daffodil leaves until they turn brown. Same for tulips!
 - Transplanting on a cloudy day reduces stress on young plants.
 - Arranging some vegetables in blocks instead of rows can reduce evaporation and watering needs. When planting rows of vegetables such as tomatoes, squash and beans, orienting them North to South will maximize sun exposure and minimize shading. Greens and cool weather crops take advantage of East - West rows from the shading of taller plants.
 - Plant a row or block of green beans once a week for season-long tender beans. Start a
- second planting of squash and cucumbers once the first planting begins to bloom. Think about for crops of lettuce, greens, or beets and start them during the month of August.
- To promote season long beauty, remove annual and perennial flowers as soon as they fade. Just pinch off the flower along it's stem.
 - Make sure you are watering properly. Deep watering will get to the root zone and help maintain healthy plants and lawns.

