



# The East Providence Historical Society

# Gazette

September 2019

Volume XXXII No. 1

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

## September

**Sunday, September 8**  
1:00 - 3:30 pm  
Hunt House open

**Monday, September 23**  
6:30pm Refreshments  
7:00 pm Program  
General Meeting  
*Public invited*

**“Lighthouses”**  
by Jeremy Entrement

Weaver Library  
41 Grove Avenue,  
East Providence, RI

## October

**Sunday, October 13**  
1:00 - 3:30 pm  
Hunt House open

**Monday, October 28**  
7:00 pm Program

**US Park Ranger John  
McNiff as Roger  
Williams**

Tockwotten Home

### 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 Cheryl Faria, Co-President

Welcome to the end of Summer! It certainly has been a busy one for the East Providence Historical Society and a lot has happened since our Summer Gazette was published.

On Sunday, May 12 from 11am to 4pm we held the Old Fashioned Family Fun Day, a day of vintage games, food, history and fun! The event kicked off with the new Education Center Dedication with remarks from Mayor Bob DaSilva and Councilman Bob Britto and a ceremony dedicating the Education Center to Sandra and Brian Turgeon for all of their efforts in bringing the Center to life. At noon we had The Great Rumford Bake Off, which was a great success thanks to Leslie Tente, Event Chair, the 62 entries, our judges and our generous sponsors. Please see the photos and article about this event inside the Gazette.



On Tuesday, May 21 we inaugurated the Education Center with a group of 26 third and fourth graders from St. Margaret's School taking a Museum Tour, a Grounds Tour and participating in an Education Activity held in the Education Center. This summer the Education Committee has been working to develop a new program to offer East Providence schools called 'A Day in the Life of Children in 1751'.



On Monday, June 24 we had the annual picnic on the front lawn of the Museum, where we voted in the slate of officers. A highlight of the picnic was the gift of a plaque to Nancy Moore dedicating the Rumford Tool Room to her.

On the fundraising front, we have been working towards our goal of raising \$100,000 for an endowment which, once established, will give us an annual draw that will help offset operating costs and help pay for a part-time helper. We have raised over \$10,000 so far and have received a matching grant pledge where gifts will be tripled up to \$2,000! Please see the endowment article for more information on this.

**The Gazette**

Is published by the  
East Providence  
Historical Society  
six times a year;  
March, April, May, September,  
October, November

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

**OFFICERS**

Cheryl Faria/Jeff Faria *Co-Presidents*  
Deborah Ormerod *1st Vice President*  
Nancy Allen *Secretary*  
Dorothy Thornley *Treasurer*  
Pat Henry *Rec. Secretary*

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Open *Buildings*  
Deborah Ormerod *Curator*  
Open *Education*  
Leslie Tente *Events*  
Cheryl Faria *Fundraising*  
Jeffrey Faria *Grounds*  
Sandra Turgeon *Marker Program*  
Miriam Kenney *Membership*  
Nancy Allen *Museum*  
Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Newsletter*  
Nancy Moore *Preservation*  
Nancy Moore *Programs*  
Nancy Moore *Publicity*  
Deborah Ormerod *Website Manager*

**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 \$25 individual, \$35  
family or business, or a Life  
Membership for \$250.

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**

**A Notice Regarding July Dues Payments!!**

We have several members who still owe dues that were payable in July!  
If you received a bill and have not paid, please use the form on this  
page OR go to our website (ephist.org) and use PayPal. Any questions  
may be directed to miriamkenney@aol.com or 401-434-9462.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of our organization!

*Miriam Kenney*, Membership

**Welcome New Members!  
A Special Thank You to the Life Members**

- Roderick J. Annis
- Karen Kesner
- K. Eric Crook & Joanne Perella
- Linda McCall

New Life member:

- Mark Saunders

Current member who upgraded to Life:

- William McWeeney



Don't forget to check for  
electronic news and  
photos about EPHIST at  
ephist.org and on  
Facebook.



**Membership Form**  New  Renewal/Change

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

\$25 Individual       \$35 Family/Business       \$250 Life

# The Bake-Off / Family Fun Day/ Ed Center Dedication

Not even the pouring rain dampened the smell of the goodies or the enthusiasm of the crowd on Mother's Day for the first annual Bake-Off and Family Fun Day. The big tent (our thanks to the City Recreation Dept.) and smaller tents kept everything dry and the food trucks kept the aromas coming. The delicious odors under the big top were incredible and the anticipation as the judges worked their way around the 62 entries was palpable. (see photos for winners) What tough duty for the judges! Everyone agreed before the day was over that this all HAD to happen again. Imagine if the sun had shone! Tremendous thanks to Leslie Tente and her crew for a splendid first effort!

## Congratulations to the winners!

### Adult Division:

**First Place:** Missy Warzeka of East Providence for her Orange Creamsicle Cake

**Second Place:** Raquel Mireles of Rumford for her Pecan Bars

**Third Place:** Stefanie Carlone of Barrington for her Chinese 5-Spice Cake with Salted Caramel Icing and Apple Filling

### Junior Division:

**First Place:** Max, Cole and Roy Beattie of Rumford for The Magnificent Muffin Medley

**Second Place:** Joy Ricklin of Cranston for Carrot Banana Bread Cheesecake

**Third Place:** Olivia Coelho of Rumford for Great, Great, Grammie's Molasses Cookies

## Thank You to Our Bake-Off Sponsors



For more pictures of the event visit our website at [ephist.org](http://ephist.org) and select [Events/Pictures](#) from the menu.

You can also enter the direct link to the page:

<http://ephist.org/events/old-fashioned-family-fun-day-5-12-2019/>

# Memories of Wayside Furniture Company Inc.

by Mike Fink

The Halliday building at the corner of James Street and Taunton Avenue stands as a landmark of my boyhood and youth and well into my adult life and career. My parents, Moe and Betty C. Fink, established the Wayside Furniture Company, first at 139

Waterman Avenue and then at 178 Taunton Avenue,

when I was in grammar school. While I was away at summer camp in the early 1940s, my mother would send colorfully illustrated envelopes with letters from 139

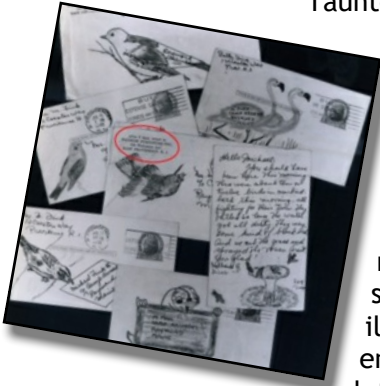
Waterman Ave. I recall the gathering of the business papers, the ledgers displayed on our dining room table in my father's neat handwriting, the then-new typewriter, stapler, and road map atlas of East Providence, in preparation for the grand opening of the business at 139 Waterman Avenue and then in that golden brick structure a block away at 178 Taunton Avenue which was at first rented and later purchased in 1953 from the Halliday family.

I can still clearly remember the pigeon nests that settled atop the awnings of the display windows at 178 Taunton Avenue. Betty played the role of hostess and salesperson, while Moe delivered the home furnishings from a little green Ford pick-up truck, often with the assistance of his firstborn son Edward, and sometimes with the help of his brother, my uncle Sam, a veteran home from the war and his military medic service, and now resuming his training as an upholsterer. You see, the name Fink was always associated with furniture. There was Fink Brothers Upholstery on Eddy Street where Women and Infants Hospital now figures on the landscape. Harry H. Fink

built that wholesale business from his life in London, England, where Moe was born. During the Great Depression, Fink Brothers collapsed into bankruptcy and Moe translated into the retail end the family tradition of buying, fixing, and selling everything for the home, from bedroom sets to parlor love-seats to hope chests. He had studied not the craft, but the survival skills of the post-depression economy of the local trade. Betty, with her Romanian and Canadian background, brought an esthetic and social sense to the enterprise. She would dress the windows and carve miniature versions of the bookcases and mahogany tables and chairs to charm the children. She even borrowed the dolls of some of the daughters of our customers and sewed complete wardrobes of clothing and then returned the toys to the tots, enchanting the little girls and endearing herself to their mothers.

History plays its part in all stores and shops. One day a wounded veteran came in on a sort of dolly: he had lost his legs! Of course, my mother treated him with respect and honor and made the sales that were called for. After he left, she went into a backspace and wept openly. How do I know these things? Well, as the youngest, I often came home from school alone to an empty house. I would telephone "East Providence 2661" (note, no "1" first, no area code, not even the phrase "Geneva", just EA2661) and my mom would tell me the details of her day so far. I would report on my day at my school desk with its proverbial inkwell and pen with point to be dipped into it. Once, a telegram arrived and it held the sad news that my maternal grandfather had died up in Montreal. I had to read that message and convey that melancholy fact to Betty. (Actually, I was tactful enough to ask for Moe first because I knew by instinct that the news should come via him, not me.)

My narrative point here is that 178 Taunton Avenue was more than an emporium. It was an empire. After Moe and Betty bought the building, my middle brother Charles, known as "Chick", studied architecture and designed the conversion of the attic spaces of the newly acquired building into office spaces. So many veterans from World War II were returning in search of work to support their new families or to help in their parents' lives, that the office spaces Chick dreamed up, then still a student of architecture at M.I.T., were desirable. Moe charged only token rentals to these soldiers. It was a kind of patriotic gesture plus a chance to encourage his middle son's



ambitions to build a better world, not by destroying houses or structures but by re-thinking how they could function usefully.

I went away to college and on voyages, as I was studying English and French cultures and literatures, especially poetry. As for my future vocation, well... I conducted a French class up that steep staircase to show off the educational theories of that era, which I had pondered at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The idea was that all over the world people were leaving one language and seeking a better situation elsewhere. You had to learn another tongue to fit in and thrive and live again. I hired a mandolin player to accompany my limited skill at singing songs in French to the children of Quebec who had forgotten their heritage. My own junior high school French teacher, Catherine Martin, visited that class at 178 Taunton, and so did Bernice Bergeron and her daughter Doris, later my student at Rhode Island School of Design.

My brother Edward, by the way, left Wayside Furniture as a drafted soldier in the Korean Conflict. (His name is inscribed on a brick at the memorial at the Providence Court House.) When he came marching home, he married and had three children, but chose to mix his responsibilities to "the store" with study for a teaching certificate at Rhode Island College. That's another story. My relevant point here is that the building I am finding words and sentences to explore held many dramatic turning points for my family for four decades.

Betty passed away on August 2, 1965. She was born on August 2, 1905. She gave birth to "Chick" (who inherited her artistic talents) on August 2. (That seems to be an almost mystical date. I light several memorial candles every August 2.) Moe continued the

spinning turns of fortune and misfortune. Among my many rich souvenir memories there is the pigeon egg I redeemed from those nests above the awnings and tried to hatch under a lamp. Alas, my quest for a pet dove came to naught. (But I am still the faculty sponsor of the RISD pigeon club.)



Betty and Moe Fink



business around the corner of the same building, on James Street. I would visit him there daily and keep him up on my personal affairs, as I had done on the telephone with Betty as a boy. He rented the major space to Bernice Bergeron for her drapery business, and part of the front fenestration became a superb and splendid antique bookshop. When Moe died, on July 2, 1977, the building became the property of Ed, Chick, and Mike (me). I took the basement furniture, things taken in trade and left to be somehow recycled, plus some chairs from the warehouse collections, to furnish my summerhouse, as well as my apartment, but we three heirs to Wayside Furniture pretty much took away simply memories, a respect for furniture, and a special affection for East Providence itself, as an allegory of America. America: where you can build a life and launch a family, find a function in a fresh community, play a part in the world's

## Volunteer Corner

Would you like to be more involved with the East Providence Historical Society?

We certainly would welcome your help!! Your help can be on an as needed basis for specific projects or as an active member of one our committees, or somewhere in between!

Please visit our website at [ephist.org](http://ephist.org) and review the many opportunities listed in the Volunteer Opportunities link. Or contact Cheryl Faria at [cherylafaria@verizon.net](mailto:cherylafaria@verizon.net) or call 401-419-8682

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Thanks for the Help at the Family Fun Day

### Volunteers and Judges:

- Roberto L. DaSilva, Mayor, City of East Providence
- Robert Britto, Council President, City of East Providence
- Laura McNamara, Executive Director, East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce
- Diane Sullivan, Director of Recreation, City of East Providence
- Brendalee O'Hara, President, O'Hara Senior Care Services, Inc.
- Chef Sarah Williams, Seven Stars Bakery
- Chef Jack Chiaro, Johnson and Wales University
- Chef Kayla Morris, Chef/Owner, Gingersnaps Bakery, Lincoln, RI
- Will Francis, Edward Jones
- Jeff Pimental, Graphic Designer, Rumford, RI
- The Tente Family: David, Holly, Jillian and Carol
- Renee Alexander
- Dan Carr
- Jennifer Hyde
- Will Norton
- Andy Valerio

## Thank You to Our Open House Sponsors

Rickard.Smith.Realtor.com

401.834.2156



WASHINGTON TRUST®



## The Historian's Circle

Thank you to those who have donated to our Annual Fund. With your Historian's Circle gift, you are helping to make a profound difference in the achievement of the Society's annual, strategic vision and endowment goals.

### Hunt's Mills Park: \$500+

- Nancy Allen
- Cheryl and Jeff Faria
- Nancy and Dan Moore
- Nancy Stevens
- Dotty Thornley

### Crescent Park: \$250-\$499

### Vanity Fair Park: \$100-\$249

- Ann Linde
- 10 Mile River
- Gail Ransom
- Cindy Sloan

### Boyden Heights Park: \$50-\$99

- Pamela and Paul Gaudet
- Miriam Kenney
- Jena and Mike McNulty
- Ed Serowick
- Tom Warzeka

### Friends - \$1-\$49

- Karen and Mike Antonowicz
- J. Stephen Bentz
- Carolyn DiFabio
- Hillary Fournier
- Dave Kelleher
- Bill King
- Carol Lavin
- Loretta Monahan
- Deb Ormerod
- Jack Richer
- Marianne Walsh
- Hillary Fournier

Thank You!!!

## Public Meeting

September 23 @ 7:00pm

Weaver Library, 41 Grove Ave., East Providence 02914

# "A Lighthouse is Much More than a Beacon"

By Jeremy D'Entrement

"Lighthouses are endlessly suggestive signifiers of both human isolation and our ultimate connectedness to each other." - Virginia Woolf

In celebration of our own Pomham Lighthouse having received the highest RI award for historic restoration last October, we welcome Jeremy D'Entrement, the leading authority on NE lighthouses. Jeremy is the author/co-author of more than 20 books including the "Lighthouse Handbook: New England" and "The Lighthouses of RI." He has appeared on the History Channel, the Travel Channel, Public Television and National Public Radio speaking about lighthouses and related topics. His presentations focus on the rich human history of the keepers and their families, using historic images and recent photos as well as video and audio clips.

In May 2019, Jeremy was honored with the "Keeper of the Light" award by the American Lighthouse Foundation. You can find his extensive, eclectic biography at:

[www.lighthousefoundation.org/2019/05/jeremy-dentrement](http://www.lighthousefoundation.org/2019/05/jeremy-dentrement) (or just type in his name.)

## Dates to Remember This Fall

**Sunday, Sept 8 from 1:00-3:30pm**

Open house at Hunt House Museum  
 "Hikes at Hunt's" - 1:30pm at the Gazebo  
 "Master Gardeners in the Gardens" - 2:30pm in the gardens

**Monday, Sept 23 at 7:00pm**

Public meeting at Weaver Library  
 "A Lighthouse is much more than a beacon" (see above article)

**Sunday, Oct 13 from 1:00-3:30pm**

Open house at Hunt House Museum  
 "Hikes at Hunt's" - 1:30pm at the Gazebo  
 "Master Gardeners in the Gardens" - 2:00pm in the gardens  
 2:30 Talk - Different ways to Preserve Your Excess Fall Produce

**Monday, Oct 28 at 7:00pm**

Public meeting at Tockwotten Home  
 US Park Ranger John McNiff as Roger Williams

## EPHS Endowment!!

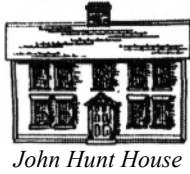
We have set a goal to raise \$100,000 over three years to establish an endowment for the East Providence Historical Society. Once established, the endowment will provide us with an annual draw that we can use to help offset the costs of operations and hiring a part-time helper. We have already raised \$10,375 towards that goal.

At the June picnic, Jeff Faria announced that he and Cheryl will match 2:1 up to \$2,000 - meaning that if you contribute \$10, your gift gets tripled to \$30; if you contribute \$30, your gift gets tripled to \$90!

If you can help contribute to this goal, please make your check payable to the East Providence Historical Society with a note saying Endowment in the memo line. Your gift could be in the form of Planned Giving, an Annual Bequest or other donation recommended by your Financial Advisor.

## Endowment Fund Progress





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

**Non-Profit Organization**  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
**Providence, RI**  
**Permit #2712**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

---

## Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

Keep up with weeding. Do not compost mature seed heads. Cut them over a bowl or bag to prevent dropping seeds and placed these in your trash.

Garden centers have many perennial plants on sale now. Always pull the plant out of its pot to check the roots. If it is too root bound, it will be tough to survive. You can use a sharp pruning blade to cut and free up the roots so that they will spread when you plant. Slice vertically into the plant root ball about 1 inch with the blade to unbind the roots.

Early September is the best time to seed or reseed your lawn. Be sure to have good seed to soil contact for better germination and keep the area moist until the grass is at least 2 inches tall.

Rain barrels at the corners of your downspouts are an excellent way to help manage torrential down pours. By

holding that water a day or two after the rain, even if you then release it, you are helping our municipal water system not be overloaded. To keep rain barrels free of mosquitoes, you can use the following methods:

- Securely place a screen over the top of the barrel.

If you don't have a screen,

- Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of simple liquid dishwashing soap every couple of weeks,

- Apply Bt or horticultural oil over the surface to create a sheen so the mosquitoes will suffocate. Even vegetable oil at about 1/4 cup will create that sheen. Do this every couple of weeks.

- Try adding a couple of goldfish! If your rain barrel is in the shade, the fish will eat the larva and create extra nitrogen in the water for you to use in your garden. Be sure to remove the goldfish and bring them indoors before the first hard frost!

