

OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY
■ NEWS LETTER ■

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

If you read OLDE NEWS chances are you are a member of the Historical Society or are interested in some aspect of preservation whether it be the preservation of artifacts, architecture, or historical information. Therefore, we have some good news for you: this month for the first time ever East Providence is joining the rest of the country and observing National Historic Preservation Week May 13-19!

The report the Historic Properties Commission sent to the Council last year (for consideration as part of the City's new comprehensive plan). suggested the observance of Preservation

MEETING



THE MAY MEETING
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
will be held May 21, 1990
from 7:15 pm
at Newman Congregational
Church.
Guest Speaker, Rosalee Oakley
Association for Gravestone
Studies

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

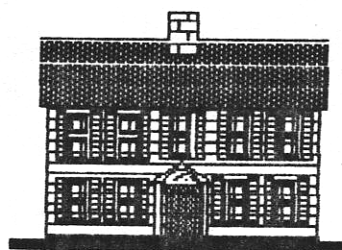
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Week as a way of increasing public awareness in the importance of historic preservation in East Providence.

This year's event was planned by an ad hoc committee comprised of representatives of East Providence's Historic Properties and Carousel Commissions, Cable TV of East Providence, the GFWC Rumford Junior Women's Club, the East Providence Historical Society, the Public Library, and the School Department.

One of the events planned was the reenactment of a Town Council meeting from the eight-teen sixties. Our present City Council members were good sports and participated in the reenactment dressed in appropriate attire for the period. The performance helped to lighten the mood that has pervaded the Council lately and also got the Preservation Week observance off to a festive start.

Preservation has never been a top priority here but with such gracious cooperation from the Council anything is possible

**OLDE NEWS**

published monthly by

The East Providence Historical Society

Editor

George Field

EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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OFFICERS

President	Claudette Field
First Vice-President	Michael Charves
Second Vice-President	Virginia Berwick
Secretary	Lura Sellow
Corresponding Secretary	Rose Marie Sirenski
Treasurer	Martha Rivas
Assistant Treasurer	Greta Charves

BOARD MEMBERS

Members at Large	Alyce (Billie) Arden
	Ellen O'Hare
	Nancy Stevens

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Artifacts	Edna Anness
Grant Writing	Jewel Driokamer
Hunt House Restoration	G. Fales Peirce
Membership	Virginia Berwick
Newsletter	George Field
Mailing subcommittee	Florence Adams
Preservation	Nancy Moore
Publicity	Florence Adams
Safety and Security	Scott Booth
Ways and Means	W. and M. Vincent

MY NIGHT AS DEBORAH GRANT HUNT

For those of you who did not have the opportunity (or the desire) to take part in the Mystery Dinners I'd like to tell you what it was like to be the guest of Allen Hunt.

Upon our arrival at the Hunt House we were escorted into the back parlor where sherry was being served to the guests of Allen Hunt. After a time we were announced by the butler and seated in Allen Hunt's dining room. Then Amy, the maid announced that Allen Hunt had been murdered and that we were all suspects — and the game was on.

At first it was hard to keep track of our twenty fellow guests but with the help of our clue books we were soon deeply involved in trying to accuse one another of mayhem and mischief if not murder.

After an hour or so we were so familiar with the characters that we might have known them all our lives. By then we knew many of their sordid little secrets so it was easy to consider some of them prime suspects in poor

Allen's death.

Of course the talent of the person playing the role had a lot to do with these feelings. The night I went, the diners who played Gertrude Brown, Isabella Drowne, Clinton Drowne, and Elijah Peck among others were so good at their roles that they became suspects.

After three hours of nearly non-stop laughter we had disseminated all our clues, so it was time to cast our votes for the murderer. My fellow guests and I were convinced that there had been a conspiracy between the Drownes and Mr. Peck. Poor Deborah (my character) didn't have a chance of being the murderer. As Allen's new daughter -in-law she had arrived in town only a few hours before, so she hardly had a chance to plan a murder even if she'd had a strong motive. Anyway, after the constable had served warrants for the arrest of the murderers, we were free to go.

However, we were having such a good time that no one made a move to leave. In fact we got

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WAYS AND MEANS

Whoever coined the phrase "crime does not pay" obviously hadn't reckoned with the East Providence Historical Society and its Ways and Means Committee. By May 13th murder and mayhem had helped the Society turn a tidy profit, as the First Annual Murder Mystery Dinners concluded, and from all accounts the dinners were a financial and artistic success.

Pat Millette, the Chairman of the event and Martha Rivas, our Treasurer, deserve more than a round of applause, they deserve a standing ovation for their efforts to make murder turn a profit.

When Pat conceived of the idea of having Mystery Dinners at the Hunt House last summer, it seemed like an overwhelming task. Pat, however, was sure it could be done and it is because of her determination and boundless enthusiasm and energy that the idea came to fruition. Pat put her professional life on hold so that she could have a hand in every

aspect of this project to ensure its success (at one point she considered doing all the cooking!).

She not only headed the committee that planned the event, she co-authored the mystery, and did a lot of the less glamorous things as well, such as cleaning the bathroom at the Hunt House on clean-up day! Pat and her husband Paul also worked at the dinners every night and took all the dirty dishes home to wash and bring back for the next dinner.

Martha Rivas is leaving the Board of the Historical Society in June to devote herself to her first baby, which she expects in September. But she's leaving in a blaze of glory after having devoted most of her free time during the last two months to the Mystery Dinner. Martha, who has a demanding job as manager of the Bristol office of Old Stone Bank, worked nights and weekends with Pat writing the mystery that the dinners were based

on. She also kept track of the money which was pouring in from the ad book. She ran errands and even scrubbed windows and floors on clean-up day. When we say that the Mystery Dinners could not have happened without Pat and Martha it is not an exaggeration.

But even this dynamic duo couldn't have produced a series of dinners without a lot of help. So we must also thank Edna Anness, who did research, Madeline and Walter Vincent who ran errands and worked along with Pat on the dinners, George Field, who during the week before the first dinner, spent all his after-work hours typing the twenty clue books, and Mike Charves who spent time during his vacation pasting up the ads for the ad book.

Special recognition must go to Jane Sander who chaired the ad book, which was produced in conjunction with the Mystery Dinners. Her persistence and hard work made the project a financial success. Jane also appeared before the City Council on

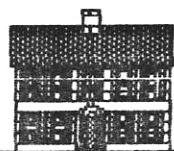
our behalf and got the fee waived for the liquor licenses for the dinners, a tremendous savings for the Society.

In addition to all the people who poured large amounts of time into this endeavor we must also thank the people who came through when we needed them: like the dedicated crew who showed up to clean the house, the people who ran last minute errands, provided props, or served at the dinners and to Lura Sellew who calligraphied the name tags and Florence Adams who did her usual wonderful job with publicity.

We should also thank two people who are not members of this organization but who became involved because they are friends of members. Jill Singewald, who is a friend of mine, spent two hectic days with me as we worked out the layout for parts of the ad book and printed the type on her laser printer (to give the book a more professional look). Gail Medbury, a friend of Pat's, spent a very, *very* long night printing out the original pages of



HUNT HOUSE UPDATE



April 28th, the day of the Big Clean-Up at the Hunt House was an artistic success, even though it was not as well attended as might have been wished. Fortunately, Walter Vincent and his merry men had been busy enough so there wasn't a lot to do to make the place presentable for the series of guests we were expecting. The people who did decide to sacrifice one of the few nice weekend days we've had this spring had sufficient energy to get everything done on our list before they left. We even managed to move our donated refrigerator into its temporary place for the mystery dinner, and Earl Berwick managed to coax it back to life before the dinner.

The Ways and Means Committee did a fine job in making the Hunt House an inviting place to have a murder, and the first weekend of the Murder Mystery Dinners was a great success.

Once the keeping room was set for twenty places for dinner, the wine was poured and the candles lit, Hunt House was transformed from a place of empty spaces and unfinished surfaces into, well, a home. Sometimes it takes an event like this to make us realize that the Hunt House is just that: our home. Special congratulations must go to Pat Millette and Martha Rivas, who worked long, insane hours to make the Mystery Dinners happen. Their families will be glad to see them again.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

On May 1st, 2nd and 3rd three groups of children from the Myron Francis School under the direction of Ana Flores, artist in residence at the school, toured the John Hunt House and received an interpretation of what family life was like in the eighteenth century in a house such as

this. They saw the house in the process of restoration and also toured the grounds of the Hunt's Mills area. There followed a sketching session of impressions they had received.

We have received three groups of donations to the collection. Virginia Berwick has donated a scrapbook of pictures which she has taken of historic buildings in East Providence and scenes from various mileposts in the history of the Society. She also has mounted several posters for exhibition of events and sites of historical importance. G. Fales Pierce has donated six 8"x10" photographs of historic houses in Rumford and a series of six pictures covering the demolition of the Old Town Hall on Pawtucket Avenue in Rumford Center. We received from Mary J. Flores (no relation to Ana) 37 annual reports of the Town of Rehoboth.

There are now new room darkening shades in the storage rooms which greatly cut down on the heat from the sun in the afternoon. Also purchased are two

newspaper storage boxes and acid free storage envelopes for pamphlets, photos and the like. Also a hand vacuum was purchased to clean our quilt and future textiles. The Carpenter Museum in Rehoboth is going to join with us on future purchases of conservation materials to reduce costs.

Edna Anness

WAYS AND MEANS cont

the clue book on two computer printers in her office so that the twenty books could be photocopied in time for the first dinner.

Finally (yes, there is an end to this) we would like to thank Bill Simpson, whose company Simply Simpson catered the dinners for a very reasonable price. His fine food added to the success of the affair.

The best part is that all this hard work brought in thousands of dollars. Bravo, team!

Claudette Field

DEBORAH HUNT cont.

very silly and brought in the prop dummy representing Allen Hunt from the lawn and had Sarah Ann Bullock Hunt, his widow, pose with it!

Before the party broke up everyone agreed that we'd had a wonderful time and we could hardly wait for the opportunity to solve the next mystery.

Claudette Field

Members

We need lots and lots of members!

Celebrate National Preservation Week by joining the Historical Society

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

- ◆ Patron/Sponsor.....\$100.
- ◆ Life75.
- ◆ Family.....15.
- ◆ Single.....10.

Last Chance!

(Cut out and bring to next meeting)

I would like to nominate the following as officers of the East Providence Historical Society:
For President:

For 1st V.P.:

For 2nd V.P.:

For Treasurer:

For Secretary:

For Corresponding Secretary:

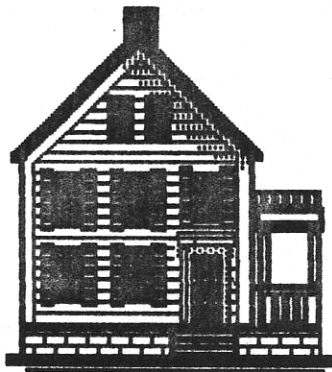
Help Wanted

Why not stop by the Hunt House some Tuesday or Thursday and lend a hand? Whether you can give an hour or a hundred hours we need you!

THE OFFICIAL OLDE NEWS CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1 hunt house workday	2	3 hunt house workday	4 Murder Mystery Dinner	5 Murder Mystery Dinner
6 Murder Mystery Dinner	7	8 hunt house workday	9	10 hunt house workday	11 Murder Mystery Dinner	12 Murder Mystery Dinner
13	14	15 hunt house workday	16	17 hunt house workday	18	19
20	21 May Meeting	22 hunt house workday	23	24 hunt house workday	25	26
27	28 Memorial Day	29 hunt house workday	30	31 hunt house workday	1	2
3	4	5 hunt house workday	6	7 hunt house workday	8 old news wanted now	9
10	11	12 hunt house workday	13	14 hunt house workday	15	16
17	18	19 hunt house workday	20 Board Meeting	21 hunt house workday	22	23
24	25 June Meeting	26 hunt house workday	27	28 hunt house workday	29	30

Hunt House Workdays: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays



Spring Help for Homeowners

Historic News Network (HNN)

(East Providence) The color of your house can be historically correct but still be wrong if you hate the color. At least that's how Jacqueline Connell feels about historic paint colors. Ms. Connell will discuss paint colors Thursday, May 17 at 7:30 at City Hall, during a presentation co-sponsored by the EP Historical Society and the Public Library.

An architectural consultant, house restorer, historian and designer, Ms. Connell teaches at Roger Williams College and is a member of Providence Preservation Society's consultants bureau. She has been quoted as saying that "you don't have to put exactly the right color for the period of the house, if you don't like it. The exception might be if you're doing a house museum." She will illustrate her talk with different styles of houses giving examples of what's good and what isn't. The lecture is a part of East Providence Preservation Week celebration. It is free and open to the public.

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