



OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY
■ NEWSLETTER ■

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country..." "Extra, extra, read all about it! President Kennedy assassinated! Extra, extra..."

The transition of new leadership in the East Providence Historical Society won't be quite as drastic, nor as critical, as were events 30 years ago. (Has it been that long?)

However, change in any group is a time that requires a period of readjustment for all involved. The new Board of Directors and Committee Chairpersons must

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MEETING



THE NEXT MEETING
OF THE E.P.
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
will be held September 23,
1991
from 7:15 pm
at Newman Congregational
Church.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (cont.)

adjust to their new roles and responsibilities. The membership must adjust to the new leadership. Change usually means a period of new challenges, goals, opportunity and a time for growth.

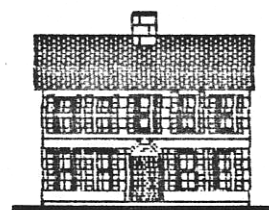
The changes Claudette and other individuals made over the past years greatly improved the Society. We owe a tremendous amount to them all: the President, the Committee Chairpersons and all the other volunteers that have contributed so much to the Historical Society and brought it to the position in the community that it has today.

As president of the Society this year, my task is to help this society accomplish its objectives by improving the way we operate and focusing the efforts of the society. In order to do this we need input from the membership at large.

The greatest impact we can have is to **voice our opinions and contribute our time**.

Letting our committee represen-

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OLDE NEWS
is published monthly by
The East Providence Historical Society

Editor George Field, IV

EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, Rhode Island 02916
438-1750

OFFICERS

President	Scott Booth
First Vice-President	Nancy Moore
Second Vice-President	Patricia Millette
Secretary	Kris Rose
Corresponding Secretary	Lura Sellow
Treasurer	Rose Marie Sirenski
Board Members-at-Large	Virginia Berwick Virginia Solitto Nancy Stevens

Scott Booth, our new president, is in the process of forming the Society's new Board of Directors for the coming year. A status report will be given next month.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The committee consisted of Virginia Berwick, Ellen O'Hare, Rose-Marie Sirenski, Kit Rodman and Nancy Stevens all of whom have served since the inception of the committee in 1989. New members added this year were Fales Pierce, Gladys Panzerella, Bill Simpson, Kris Rose and Onna Williams. The committee met July 19, Oct. 16, Nov. 17, Jan. 16, Feb. 7, Mar. 21 and June 5 1991 when there was a sufficient number of artifacts to accept. The committee was also polled by phone when unexpected business came up such as loans, expenses or charges for services.

The Hunt House was regularly open to the public for a total of 196 hours. This included Tuesday and Thursday mornings and four Sunday afternoons in December. Tours were also given to the E.P. Rotary Club, the Rumford Junior Women's Club, the Brown Hiking Club, and three classes from the Myron Francis School. Two slide presentations entitled "Historic East Provi-

dence" were presented by the chairman to the Couples Club of St. Michael's and Hope Church, the Rumford Junior Women's Club and a junior class at E.P. High School. A presentation will be given on Aug. 2 to the Roger Williams Grange.

Two hundred thirty-two visitors signed the Guest Book but many passed through without signing. The chairman worked 50 days at the House for a total of 157 hours. Another 80 hours were spent at home typing cards and letters and accessioning transportable artifacts. Virginia Berwick volunteered to help frequently as did Ellen O'Hare who helped with displays and Nancy Stevens who made the curtains for the Keeping Room. The Christmas display this year was a "Victorian Christmas."

Charlie Jackson made shelving for the back storerooms and display panels for the museum room. The latter room was painted by Virginia Berwick, Lowell Anness and the chairman. The new shelves were washed and polyurethaned, and the three rooms

cont. on next page

MUSEUM COMMITTEE REPORT

cont.

fumigated on June 25. Several file boxes previously stored in the pump house were especially fumigated for three months. Acid free tissue, mylar and acid free boxes were used to store artifacts.

Fifty five individual sets of gifts were received, totalling 343 separate items. Each of these has been given an accession number, described and stored. A tracing system has been created consisting of four separate sets of file cards: Accession, Donor, Associated Personal and Associated Geographic. A Nomenclature file will be done this summer to complete the system.

A docent committee was created and received training. It is hoped the members will continue as needed: Nancy Stevens, Kit Rodman, Virginia Berwick, Ellen O'Hare, Bill Simpson, Virginia Whitcomb, Carolyn Donahue and Kris Rose.

Four displays have been put up at the Hunt House. The one on the restoration is rather permanent. "The Amusement Parks of East

Providence" was up from Dec. 1 to May 1, "Good Old Golden Rule Days", an exhibit of remnants of education in schools no longer in existence in E. Providence will be up from June 30 to Oct. 1. The Museum also loaned war mementoes to the Heritage Commission for a display in City Hall in May. Our collection of Civil War letters were sent out to Jacqueline Damian by the president in search of a publisher in November.

Recent gifts to the collection include donations by the following: John Agren, Lewis and Sophie Allen, Isadora Andrews, Virginia Berwick, Lillian Crumby, Betty Davis, Isabel Izzo, Charlie Jackson, Helen Smith, Anne Reynolds, Lowell Anness and Nancy Stevens.

Two months ago we had a mystery question: "What was meant by Grand Commandery UOGC?" Anne Reynolds researched the question and provides the following answer: The UOGC was a group of men and women organized in 1876 by the Free Masons. Total abstinence from alcohol was a prerequisite

for membership. The local chapter was No. 333, East Providence, RI. In 1910 there were 18,000 nationwide. In 1962 the society merged with the Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Society, and is now defunct. We have two muster pins for this group in our collection. Many thanks to Anne for her research and to Claire Clegg for the pins.

The Museum is open by appointment by calling 438-1750 or 434-3347.

Edna Anness, Chairman

Remember, August is the start of the Society's new business year!

If your Dues are overdue, send them in today!
And remember, they're pro-rated if you joined in 1991.

NAME (S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Single (\$10) Family (\$15)

IMPORTANT BOARD MEETING

A Joint Board Meeting of the Society will be held at the Hunt House on Monday, August 19 at 7:30 pm. All board members, both new and "ex", are requested to attend. The purpose of the meeting is to insure an orderly transfer of the Society's business between the new officers and Board members and the departing ones. If you have any files, memoranda, pearls of wisdom, un-finished business, etc., please bring them with you so that your successor may benefit from your years of experience, and carry on in your fine tradition.

HUNT HOUSE UPDATE

Although the summer doldrums have hit the Hunt House, there are still things brewing under the surface. The most important of these is the continuing work on the heating system. While we wait to hear from the RI Historical Preservation Commission, the summer is slipping away and the fall heating system is coming upon us. Bearing this in mind, the Building Committee has instructed Walter and his merry men to start removing radiators and steam pipes that are impeding continuing restoration of the interior. Doing this will not only allow us to continue work on the interior, but also serve notice that the Hunt House must have a new heating system by the onset of winter.

The building Committee is also evaluating changes to our proposed heating system following some of the suggestions of the Preservation Commission. The two primary changes are to reduce the number of registers in the areas which will not be used



as either office or museum spaces. The second was to move the attic furnace out of its original location in the chimney stack and towards the back of the house, behind a wall built specifically to conceal it. It is felt by both the Preservation Commission and by other visitors that the attic rooms may well be virtually original from when the house was first built, and as much effort as possible should be taken to preserve them.

At the present time, it appears that the basement will be the space most affected by the installation of the heating system and any structural enhancements we may make.

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And speaking of the Historical Preservation Commission, the Society has received a missive from Ted Sanderson, Executive Director of the RIHPC giving us an update on the status of the Historic Preservation Bond Issue. The bond issue, approved in the 1988 general election by a 60% to

Letters and Comments

Dear Friends,

O.K. here's the story about the Bayview Fire Company which

was one of a number of volunteer companies distributed through the town between the wars. That would be an interesting story but I don't think that anyone is left to tell it.

Anyway, I was not active in the company until after Hitler's War, so all I can tell about before then is hearsay. They were located in a one story building opposite Miss Pagny's (?) School. They were equipped with a two wheeled hose reel meant to be pulled by hand. It was often hitched to a trolley car or to a grocery delivery truck. I remember one time seeing it behind a street car heading south at a good rate of speed with the hose end bouncing on the street.

When the war started they were made part of civilian defence. The schoolroom across the street was raised up and two bays constructed below it and two Chevie fire trucks were issued

and it became Hose Four. After the war I joined the company and we reverted to volunteer status and we became call men. We were called out whenever the regular companies were busy.

We served until the new station four was built on the trail and there was no longer any need for volunteers.

Sincerely,

Hiram L. Wood

HUNT HOUSE, cont.

40% majority, currently is in limbo due to legal questions about the wording of the legislation. Mr. Sanderson informs us that a brief has been filed with the RI Supreme Court to obtain a legal opinion about the issuance of these bonds as general obligations of the state but the case will not be heard until this fall. Until such an opinion is forthcoming, the legislature cannot act on any of several motions filed in the state assembly regarding these bonds. Our representative from East Providence, Robert Weygand, has chaired an informal committee which has been searching for solutions to this impasse.

PRESIDENTS LETTER cont.

tatives know what we want and volunteering some time will make a tremendous difference. The East Providence Historical Society has a great membership with a strong nucleus that only needs to be directed to work together to accomplish its goals.

There are three general goals I would suggest we concentrate our efforts on. I would ask that each member give some thought to what they think needs to be done, improved on, corrected or just considered by the Society for the upcoming year and voice YOUR opinion and contribute whatever time you can.

First, a general observation indicates that we need to increase our membership and committee participation. While we have good participation from our membership now, some committees have difficulties attracting more than one or two volunteers. It is unfair to ask the same individuals to volunteer repeatedly time and again.

While everyone understands the time constraints on each of us, more members would help to ease some of the burden and improve the Society's effectiveness. Attracting new business members or sponsors as well might be included here.

Secondly, to both attract new members and improve participation by existing members we should consider creating some new programs to increase interest. Two programs that might accomplish this would be:

- **A Garden Committee** for our members who have green thumbs. They could work on restoring the gardens and yard areas in the back yard and to the north of the Hunt House. They could provide guidance on the authentic garden restoration, have seminars and work with the local garden clubs.

- **Historic Construction Techniques Program** for our members interested in the subject. It could develop a construction resource center that focuses on construction means and meth-

ods in restoration and preservation. Seminars and construction literature on historic renovation could be provided to those interested. Lists of contractors and suppliers with documented historic preservation experience could be maintained.

Thirdly, we should make a more conscientious effort to restore the Hunt House. Special attention should be made to help "The Restoration Crew." They and others that have helped cannot be commended

enough for the work they have done in restoring the house to date. But "The Boys" still need your help. The heating and cooling system, the summer kitchen in the basement, the grounds in back and painting of the house are all areas that need to be addressed.

Besides our membership, the Hunt House is our most valuable asset. Restoring the exterior, as well as the interior, is just as important.

By providing a summer kitchen that can be utilized for teas, small gatherings and functions, the

usefulness and charm of the entire Hunt House property would be greatly improved. However, there is much work to be done.

President Kennedy's overused quote above had far

more reaching meaning thirty years ago. However, on a smaller scale it's just as applicable to any organization including the East Providence Historical Society.

Scott Booth

Join the Historical
Society today! Send this
coupon (with money) to
E.P.H.S.
P.O.Box 4774
East Providence, RI
02916

NAME (S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Single (\$10) Family (\$15)

IMPORTANT DATES

- July 20 to August 22 **Carpenter Museum**, Rehoboth MA.
Exhibit: "ENCOUNTER IN NORUMBEGA:
The Hidden Story of New England Maps"
- August 19 **E. P. Historical Society** Joint Board Meet
ing, Hunt House, 7:30 pm (see pg. 5)
- August 22 to
September 7 **Weaver Library**, East Providence, RI.
Exhibit: "ENCOUNTER IN NORUMBEGA:
The Hidden Story of New England Maps"
- September 23 **E. P. Historical Society** September
Meeting Newman Congregational Church,
7:15 pm

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