



OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY
■ NEWSLETTER ■

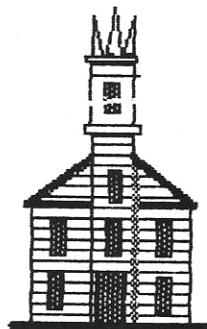
PRESIDENT'S LETTER

On Saturday the 23rd the Historical Society will hold its fourth annual Pasta Supper. This fund raiser has always been very popular and well-attended. We hope that this year is no exception.

It has become increasingly important for us to raise money since our state grant is in jeopardy. I know that Jewel Drickamer, the head of our Grant Writing Committee, will be upset with me for saying this but I'm afraid we'll never see the money from the \$44,000 grant we were awarded last fall.

Jewel has chided me for my
cont. pg. 2

MEETING



THE NEXT MEETING
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
will be held March 25, 1991
from 7:15 pm
at Newman Congregational
Church.
Guest speaker will be
Stephen Mack
see pg. 5 for details

PRESIDENTS LETTER

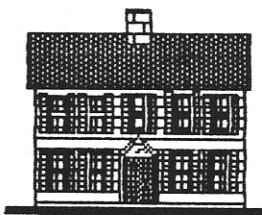
pessimistic attitude toward this grant, but it isn't so much pessimism as a strong dose of realism. I understand how she feels. The money is so important to our project it's hard to let it go. Indeed, I haven't completely given up; let's just say I'm "hoping for the best but preparing for the worst." (March's cliché')

One of our East Providence legislators, Bob Weygand, has been meeting with the powers that be since the problem first surfaced; and I applaud his efforts to correct the faulty language in the 1989 Preservation Bond Issue

However, other legislators and State House staffers have told me that we will not be seeing that money anytime soon. As a matter of fact, our project architect at the Preservation Commission teased me with that old chestnut "the check's in the mail" the last time I spoke to him. But I digress.

Getting back to the Pasta Supper, it's extremely important that we all do our best to make this year's effort a smashing success.

cont. pg. 11



OLDE NEWS

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

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Hunt House Restoration	Walter Vincent, Earl Berwick

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Artifacts	Edna Anness
Grant Writing	Jewel Drickamer
Markers	Kit Rodman
Membership	Madeline Vincent
Newsletter	George Field, IV
Mailing subcommittee	F. Adams
Preservation	Nancy Moore
Program	Bill Simpson
Publicity	Florence Adams

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

A new display has been installed in the Museum Room on the second floor. Included in the exhibit is a portion of the Rumford Junior Women's Club collection, which came into the Museum last fall, along with numerous items on loan documenting the contributions of local women to the community for the last 35 years. This display will remain until May 1st and the Hunt House Restoration display also remains on view. Call for an appointment for a tour. If there are any Riverside Junior Women's Club materials still remaining in someone's attic, the Museum would love to add them to its collection.

Since last month several new gifts have been received at the Museum: an advertising leaflet from Nancy Moore, a 1969-1970 Rumford Junior Women's Club scrapbook from Mary Auger, a red fire lantern used by the Phillipsdale Volunteer Fire Company from Charles and Hope Jackson, old newspapers featuring front page stories on Pearl Harbor and

VE day from Lewis and Sophie Allen, two antique house and furniture books belonging to Edna Cooke from her son Bud Plummer, muster pins worn by the Wachemoket Volunteer Firemen, East Providence GAR pins and ribbons, a Bicentennial Scrapbook by Mrs Robert Kofahl and a Bicentennial plaque, both from Claire Clegg, a receipt ledger and papers relating to the Judkins Display Case Factory from George and Claudette Field and a variety of commemorative materials from the Annesses.

The Museum would be interested in receiving as donations any advertising materials from old EP businesses as for example something from Allen's Drug Store, Kent Heights Market, Viall or Fisk Dairy, Centre Pharmacy medicine bottles, etc., Raymond's Hardware in Riverside, Singer's Market, Barbara's Candy Store, Kronquist's Market, the Handy Shoppe, and the Hope Creamery! Old matchbooks, candy boxes, or paint stirrers are also desirable. Stop and think of the historical

cont. next page

significance of the rubbish you are throwing away- some of it is part of East Providence's history.

Edna Anness

MARKER COMMITTEE

At its March meeting the Markers Committee will examine sample house markers from other communities and from sign companies with a view to making recommendations to the Board with regards to materials, design and cost.

There is still an urgent need for committee members.

Kit Rodman

GRANT WRITING COMMITTEE

The Grant Writing Committee met on March 5. Present were Edna Anness, Ellen O'Hare and myself.

We are considering sources for grants for outside painting, wiring and plumbing, and decisions were made on two points:

- We will try to get grants only for projects which cost over \$1,000.

- We suggest that for items

under that amount the monies in the treasury be used.

It was also suggested that we pursue the obtaining of the \$44,000 grant from the RI Historical Preservation Commission.

OLDE NEWS would be an appropriate place in which to ask members to talk to their state representatives on this matter.

Jewel Drickamer

WAYS AND MEANS

Finally, the idea to have different volunteers chair different Ways and Means events is taking hold!

Bill Simpson is chairing the upcoming Pasta Supper (see President's letter) and Gladys Panzarella has graciously agreed to chair the 1991 Christmas sale. This event, which has been a part of our annual Christmas Open House for the past two years, is very important to us. Last year, however, because we were without a volunteer to chair the sale, we scrambled to organize the volunteers at the last minute.

Although the group success-

cont. pg. 10

STEPHEN MACK, OUR MARCH SPEAKER

Our speaker for the March meeting is Stephen Mack, one of only a handful of people in this country who make a business of disassembling and then resurrecting old buildings which would otherwise be demolished. One of his most recent rescues was the Munroe Tavern in nearby Seekonk, which was removed to make room for yet another strip development along Route 6.

Mr. Mack has been doing this sort of thing since he fell in love with his current home fifteen years ago when it was a derelict, inhabited only by birds and a wild cat. He learned the art of restoration by reviving his own home, then moved on to do the same for other people. Dotted over the fifty acres of Mack's Chace Hill Farm in Ashaway are mysterious black bundles which are disassembled eighteenth century buildings covered in tarpaulins awaiting the call to be meticulously brought back to life.

While the accuracy of his reconstructions approaches museum quality, Mr. Mack realizes

that the people who will live in his houses do require some of the advantages of the twentieth century: central heat, electricity and indoor plumbing. Interviewed in the March 1990 issue of *Rhode Island Monthly* he said, "I'm now in the business of finding historic houses threatened with demolition, and with my clients reweaving the fabric of the house in order to live a modern life."

Mr. Mack plans to tour the Hunt House and then will talk to us about his work, and ours. It promises to be an interesting program.

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)

HUNT HOUSE UPDATE

The Society has received written comment from Ted Sanderson, Executive Director of the RI Historical Preservation Commission regarding our



proposed heating and air conditioning system. Some of the important points in his letter are:

- RIHPC is opposed to the installation of air conditioning in the Hunt House. Mr. Sanderson is very concerned with the possibility of damage due to condensation build-up in an air-conditioned building. They suggest storing "sensitive documents and materials" (i.e. the Museum collection) in a location such as the RI Historical Society. The Building Committee has pointed out that the problem of condensation also exists in the winter with central heating and indeed may present more of a problem due to the greater temperature differential between the cold outside air and the warm inside air that exists in winter conditions. A properly designed forced hot-air system can control the amount of

moisture in the Hunt House, and indeed is the reason we proposed this scheme in the first place, in order to maintain the proper environment for

the Museum's collection.

Edna Anness inquired about the availability of storage space for material not belonging to the RI Historical Society and was informed that there was none.

- RIHPC was also concerned with the installation of ductwork in the attic and the installation of the heating unit in the smoke-room. They feel that the attic is a well preserved and original space dating from the "nineteenth century residential use of the house and should not be impacted in any way by the installation of the heating system for the lower floors." They suggested the installation of a forced hot water system with baseboard units for heating the second floor, with the heating unit in the basement. The Building Committee recognizes that the installation of a heating system in the attic will have to be

handled very carefully in order to preserve the attic space as much as possible. We recognise as well that installation of the heating unit in the chimney smoke house presents both some technical problems as well as raises preservation issues, and we will look at alternative placement and routing methods for the duct work. At the same time, however, we also feel that the installation of forced hot water baseboard units in the upstairs rooms would be visually disruptive of those spaces, which would see much more public use than the attic. A far greater concern is that a leak in a forced hot water system, especially one on the second floor of a building not continually occupied, could be absolutely catastrophic. By the time the alarm system sensed such a leak, much of the house would be ruined by water damage. Any modernization of an old house involves trade-offs, but the Building Committee feels the Society's proposed system offers less disadvantages to the Hunt House as a whole than does the RIHPC's suggestions.

- One set of recommendations

that the Commission made that makes a great deal of sense is to reduce the amount of registers in areas of the Hunt House that will not be used for meetings or by the staff. As Mr. Sanderson says, "...the best approach for heating a historic building is to do it in moderation." He also had reservations about the placement of the register for return air (presently planned to be in the parlor wall against the staircase) and suggested an alternative location in the closet of the keeping room. A rather interesting recommendation, considering RIHPC's concern about keeping the attic as pristine as possible, was the suggestion of adding baseboard heating units in the attic rooms, thus bringing visual intrusion and the potential of water leaks up into the attic as well as on the second floor.

At this writing, Claudette has had several conversations with Don Faxon, the RIHPC architect assigned to our project. We have been urging Mr. Sanderson to come and visit the Hunt House so he can see the project first hand

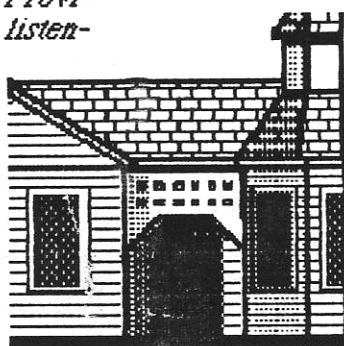
 UNION SCHOOL MEMORIES

Mr. MacDougald's charming memories of Union school came to us unsolicited. OLDE NEWS is always delighted to receive contributions, but especially reminiscences such as this which have such a direct bearing on East Providence history. Are you listening out there?

It was in the spring of 1926 or '27 that the town installed indoor plumbing in the Union School. I recall vividly when Miss Roe took the boys of my classroom into the boy's room and explained how the urinals were to be used. I was a third grade student then and I still remember how embarrassed I was by a lady being in the men's room and seeing our special plumbing. I wondered how she could know how you worked them. Miss Roe had a single sister who also taught one of the four grades, and Miss Driscoll, if I recall correctly, was another teacher.

The outhouses, boy's and girl's, had been located in the center of

the space behind the building and during that prior summer vacation the change had been effected, the outhouses removed, and all signs of their presence obliterated.



Union School

In 1925, when I was in the first grade, Miss Cute would draw a single letter on each desk top and each student was provided with colored pegs with which to overlay the chalked letter.

Thus began a career of resistance to education that lasted sixteen years.

Each class formed in the school yard before school. When the bell was rung each class filed into the rooms under the teacher's direction without talking, and with the help of John Phillip Sousa's marches.

What was good about school was going over the old wooden plank railroad bridge on Pawtucket Avenue on the way, where sometimes, after you waited for a while, a train would

continued on page 10

IMPORTANT DATES

- Monday, Mar. 11 **GFWC Rumford Junior Women's Club:**
March Meeting at Hunt House
- Sunday, Mar. 17 **St. Patricks Day**
- Saturday, Mar. 23 **E.P. Historical Society:** 4th Annual Spring
Pasta Supper, 6 pm at Newman Congregational
Church.
- Monday, Mar. 25 **E.P. Historical Society:** March Meeting.
7:15 pm at Newman Congregational Church.
- Saturday, Apr. 6 **Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission:** Making Successful Local Historic
Preservation Programs: A Statewide Conference.
8:30am - 5:00 pm Varnum Memorial Armory, East
Greenwich.
- Monday, Apr. 15 **Income Taxes Due** midnight at all local Post Offices
- Monday, Apr. 28 **E.P. Historical Society:** April Meeting. 7:15 pm
at Newman Congregational Church.

*Don't forget: Workdays at the Hunt House every Tuesday and
Thursday 8 am to 12 noon.*

UNION SCHOOL (cont.)

go through. A little boy could spend hours getting pockets of stones to drop or throw off the bridge, just waiting.

At first, older female students were our guardians, both coming and going, but they lacked the staying power to wait for trains and as soon as possible, we broke free of that protection.

Being free of girls allowed me to go under the railroad bridge and catch toads, frogs and other good things in the drainage ditches. Cigarettes were then protected by a tinfoil inner wrapper and while walking back and forth to school most boys collected the foil from packages discarded along the highway. It was stuffed into your pocket in a lump, along with horse chestnuts and other treasures.

No meals were ever served at Union Primary during my years there. You walked home and back at lunch time while dragging your feet and hoping for a train, or even a handcart, down on the tracks.

Spelling was enlivened in the

fourth grade by dividing the class in two and in turns the students would approach the blackboard and write out the teacher's spoken word. It was a penmanship class too, for once you started writing you could not erase and start again.

At no time do I recall getting a clear passing grade after the first year. It was always "on trial" and finally still "on trial" I passed out the doors and on to the Wilson Grammar School.

Joseph J. MacDougald,
(formerly of 980 Pawtucket Ave.,
Rumford)

COMMITTEES (cont.)

fully pulled the sale together — in part because of the set-up help provided by the Vincents, Ann Reynolds, Ginny Berwick and the usual cast — we could have done even better had we started planning earlier.

This year the Society is lucky to have someone as knowledgeable as Gladys to take charge for 1991. Gladys, who is proficient in many crafts, hosted a craft sale in her

own home this past holiday season.

She has ambitious plans for our annual event and has even mentioned the possibility of resuming the popular craft workshops if the interest is still there.

Anyone who would like to become part of this important committee should contact Gladys or sign-up at the next meeting. Christmas in March? It's never too early.

HUNT HOUSE UPDATE (cont.)

and meet with us face to face, but we have not been able to juggle everyone's schedule to arrive at the proper combination of times and dates. Indications are, however, that the Commission may be modifying its position on the issue of central air conditioning in light of the fact that several historic buildings in RI (notably the John Brown House) and elsewhere are at least partially air conditioned. They would like to see a new proposal from us which takes into account their concerns.

IMPORTANT REMINDER



MARCH'S BAKERS ARE
GRETA CHARVES
&
LOIS DONOVAN

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (cont.)

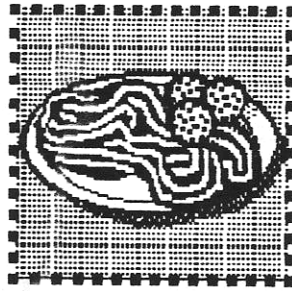
Bill Simpson, who kindly offered to chair the event, is very enthusiastic and is working hard to make the 23rd a fun night. But we need everyone's help! Be creative, get a party together, buy up a whole table and live it up! Even if you can't attend you can help by telling your friends, co-workers and neighbors about our March 23rd supper.

The tickets are still only \$6.00. There aren't many places you can get a full meal for that amount anymore.

Hope to see you there!

Claudette Field

THINK PASTA!!



**THE SOCIETY'S 4TH ANNUAL
PASTA SUPPER**

Saturday, March 23, 1991 • 6 pm • Newman Church
Adults \$6, Children \$3, under 3 free
Telephone 438-0623 or 438-1750

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P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916

