



Gazette

Vol. XVII No. 10

July/August 2005

President's Letter

Nancy Moore, President

It is such an honor to sit as your president again. This seat has been filled so ably by many people, and the Board itself is an amazing group. I know you appreciate their fine work.

This summer heat makes it difficult to get going on much of anything but we do have another open house at the Hunt House Museum on August 14th and an interesting and informative season just around the corner.

Exciting historical happenings are taking place in this city right now and we will be witnesses. The restoration of the light to the tower at Pomham Rocks Lighthouse will most likely take place by the winter and the Rumford Chemical Complex will begin a new chapter with its conversion to housing. The society membership will get details of both of these projects at fall meetings. In addition, the Rumford Collection, now housed in the Hunt House Museum, should receive national recognition by the end of the summer. Historical society Board members, Dave Kelleher and Edna Anness deserve our great thanks for their many hours of work on the above projects.

The Board wishes to thank Kris Rose for her guidance these past four years. She led us with great skill and humor. I know we all are incredibly grateful for her coordination of the annual picnic. Thanks Kris!

As the song goes, "See You In September".

"THIS OLD HOUSE" FOR SALE

Are you or someone you know looking for an historic property to live in? Occasionally, this newsletter spotlights houses that belong to members,

have some special significance or are endangered. Two houses are for sale right now in the same neighborhood: the **Farnum House** (c.1850) and the **Lyceum Hall** (1832). Both houses are on Pleasant Street, Rumford, in the historic 'Ring of the Green'.

The **Farnum House**, a cape style at 298 Pleasant Street, is newly restored where possible and tastefully remodeled where necessary. It commands a prominent lot at the intersection of Pleasant and Pawtucket Avenue and remains largely unchanged from its original aspect.

Lyceum Hall, 332 Pleasant Street, is rich with the educational history of East Providence and the present owner has lovingly cared for this house. The house is large and gracious and could easily accommodate an extended family. Both houses have period details: fireplaces, moldings, paneling, wideboard floors, plaster. To find out more about either property, contact **Jean Clarke, 374-5039**.

Planned Walk of Phillipsdale

The East Providence Historical Society is planning to participate in the **John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor's Program "Footsteps in History"** during the Columbus Day Weekend, October 8th and 9th. **Dave Kelleher** and **Ned Connors** will inform the group of some of the history of the area and visit various sites including Phillipsdale Landing, Grace Chapel, Ross Commons, and Phillipsdale School.

The walks will be conducted on Saturday, October 8th and Sunday, October 9th at 1:00 p.m. Monday the 10th will be a rain date for either day. The Hunt House Museum will also be open for the weekend from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Gazette

Is published monthly by the
EAST●PROVIDENCE●HISTORICAL●SOCIETY
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David Kelleher	<i>Preservation</i>
	<i>Program</i>
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The Hunt House Museum, Hunts Mills Road, Rumford, will be open on Sunday, August 14, 1 to 4 pm. Admission \$3; \$1 East Providence residents; Free society members.

RECOGNITION DEPARTMENT

The following society members were featured in the **East Providence Post** or **Providence Journal** in June or July:

DAVID KELLEHER, Chairman, Preservation Committee, secured a \$5,000 grant from the RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission which will be used to restore the Hunts Mills 1905 Amusement Park manager's office building which is located next to the Hunt House Museum.

VIRGINIA KENT BERWICK, Chairman, Museum Committee, received the RI Foundation's merit award for almost four decades of outstanding community service. The award was presented at the society's annual meeting.

ED SEROWICK, Director of the Looff Carousel, Crescent Park. He started as a 'ring' boy in 1950.

GLADYS PANZARELLA, hosted a tea for the Townie Trotters and Happy Hatters, local chapters of the Red Hat Society. They meet regularly for tea, scones and fun.

The historical society appreciates the corporate membership of the following businesses: **Atlantic Flag and Banner, East Providence Fuel Oil Company, Fogarty Auto Body, Graphic Ink, Inc., Gregg's Restaurant, Indoor Tennis Court, National Security, Robert Pesce (Coast Realty)**. We encourage society members to recruit corporate memberships. The annual dues, \$25.

Earl and Virginia Berwick and **Gladys Panzarella** served as docents at the Hunt House Museum on Sunday, July 10. **Cheryl and Jeff Faria** will serve on Sunday, August 14.

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 a Life Membership for \$150.

Please make check payable to:

East Providence Historical Society
and mail with form below to:

**Mona Breault, 34 Josephine Avenue,
Rumford, RI 02916-3018**

Membership Form New Renewal /Change

Name(s) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # _____

Amount Enclosed:

\$25 Family \$15 Individual \$150 Life

Warm Welcome to our New Members:
Beth Thurber
Mary Walker Tierney

WILSON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

by John Agren

In June, 1959, I was promoted from the sixth grade at Wilson Grammar School, Bourne Avenue, Rumford, to the seventh grade at Central Junior High School, South Broadway, East Providence. The sixth grade at Wilson Grammar had been a fine experience for me. The teacher and school principal, Miss Gertrude E. Ross, lived with her sister at 32 Arcade Avenue, Seekonk. Miss Ross was superintendent of the Sunday school and a Sunday school teacher at Newman Congregational Church. Our teacher was serious about having her students appreciate math and the arts, especially music. Both of these areas were right down my alley and I enjoyed and excelled in them. In music, Miss Ross had us learn a cowboy song and I can still sing several of its verses: "I'm going to leave old Texas now, They've no more use for the long horned cow. They've plowed and fenced my cattle range and the people there are all so strange."

Every day Miss Ross parked her big black four door 1937 Oldsmobile on Brayton Street pointed north just off Bourne Avenue. Our music lessons included "The Surprise Symphony" by Haydn and music by Beethoven and Mozart. These lessons were accompanied by glimpses into the lives of these artists and complementary lessons on life using the composer's life style to present the lesson. In the life of Haydn and Beethoven, it was the importance of proper care for our eyes and ears. Stephen Foster, with his wonderful music and hundreds of American folk songs such as: "Beautiful Dreamer", "Camptown Races", "Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair" and "Oh! Susanna" was a favorite of mine. This great American composer, who wrote so much beautiful music, died at the tender age of thirty-eight, apparently because he had been a heavy drinker.

Upon entering Wilson Grammar before school or after lunch or recess, we marched into the building accompanied by another great composer: The "March King", John Philip Souza. I loved it. Especially the "Washington Post March" and "Stars and Stripes Forever", my favorite song of them all. Who can listen to this fantastic American march music when played by pianists Vladamir Horowitz or Van Cliburn and not be moved?

The record player was handled by my life time friend, James 'Sam' Gifford. Sam wound up the big black Victrola with a brass and wood polished crank located on the right side of the record player. Then Sam placed the record in the proper spot, opened the doors on the front of the instrument and let the sound

come out. How I envied him for having been given this tremendous responsibility!

Sam had a white harness around his chest and under his arm, designating the fact that he was a school monitor, having immense power over all other students! Further, at the end of the school year he received a crisp new five dollar bill from Miss Ross as a reward for all of the good work he had done during the school year. That was some difference from the ten cents a week Miss Cute had paid me for my back breaking labor on her behalf in the fourth grade at Union Primary School. I loved the work Sam was doing so much that I would have done it for nothing, even without the fancy white harness around his waist and shoulders!

At the end of the sixth grade school year, at our 'Graduation Exercises', in what was the huge (so it seemed to me) Wilson Grammar School Auditorium, Miss Ross had 'Wilson Grammar School Scholarship Pins' for certain students and I was the proud recipient of one. Others who were called up to the stage to receive the pin that day included Carl Anderson, Lowell Anness, Norma Dooley, James 'Sam' Gifford, Dorothy Farrell, Mildred Peterson, Mildred Barr and Doris Freeman. Miss Ross had perfect attendance pins for deserving students and I also received a 'Wilson Grammar School Perfect Attendance Pin'.

I do not know what ever happened to my two pins. They were lost in my many moves since 1937. The pin I have was given to me by Philip Appleby who received it two years after me. I am giving this pin to the East Providence Historical Society for their display as a memento from my special friend, Philip F. Appleby.

PRESERVATION REPORT

David Kelleher, Chairman

Due to poor weather in the spring and another project that needs to be done first, **The Weaver House**, Grove Avenue, the roofing and painting of the **1905 Amusement Park Office** at Hunts Mills is now scheduled for this fall. All the paper work and a new account for the grant money have been completed.

A **demolition delay proposal** has been submitted to the City Council for consideration. The delay would allow time for the **East Providence Historic Properties Study Commission** to investigate the requested demolition of any property 50 years or older to determine whether the property is historically significant. If there is good evidence that the property is historically significant, then the owner must delay the demolition for 60 days and make a concerted effort along with help from the commission to find

(Continued on page 4)



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST

Sunday, August 14, 1 to 4 p.m.

Hunt House Museum

Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Admission Charges

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, September 7, 7 p.m.

Board Meeting *Members Welcome*

Hunt House Museum

Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Monday, September 26, 7 p.m.

Members Meeting *Public Invited*

Masonic Temple Taunton Avenue

Program: *History and Tour of Temple*

Preservation Report *(Cont'd from Page 3)*

another interested party who would restore the property. After the 60 days and a reasonable effort at trying to save the structure has been unsuccessful, the demolition may be done. Demolition delays are in place in a number of cities and towns including Block Island, Warren, North Attleboro, and Cambridge.

A third printing of the booklet, "Historic East Providence" will be available in the fall thanks to a large donation from the East Bay Tourism Council and donations from The East Providence/Seekonk Rotary Club and the East Providence City Council. It will be available at the main desk at City Hall and at all the public libraries.

A plaque has been officially dedicated at the Members' Center at Ross Commons Condominiums on Roger Williams Avenue. The plaque informs the public of the historic significance of the Phillipsdale area.

Effort continues to have the mural in the East Providence Post Office, Grove Avenue, restored. A letter was sent to Rep. Patrick Kennedy to request his help in getting the mural restored.