

Gazette

Volume XXXVI No. 3

Nov/Dec 2023

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

Upcoming Dates:

Fall Open Houses

1-3:30 pm

November 12/December 10

1:30 pm

Hikes at Hunt's Gazebo

1-3 pm

Family Games
front lawn

1-3:30 pm

"Roots" at the Education
Center

Exhibit

"The Heyday of Amusement
Parks in East Providence"

General Meeting

Monday Dec 11

6:30 pm Weaver Library

"Love at the Indoor Court"

East Providence Historical Society

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East Providence, RI 02916-4774

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Cheryl Faria and Jeff Faria, Co-Presidents

Welcome to the Fall and Winter edition! This last 2023 installment of the *Gazette* covers both November and December. Below are highlights of events, activities, and cultural happenings at the East Providence Historical Society and throughout the East Providence community.

Union Primary Tour

On September 25 many of us had the opportunity to take a tour of the Union Primary School property, which has been transformed into a small multi-family apartment building. Thank you, Nancy Moore for making this event such a success! Please see the full article in the centerfold.

Visit by Paine and Sabin Descendants

On September 28 descendants of Stephen Paine and Israel Sabin visited the Hunt's Mills property. This group of 9 from Connecticut, Vermont and Pennsylvania were thrilled to see the site of the original mill that was built and run by their ancestors in 1643.



The Gazette

Is published by the East Providence Historical Society

Eight times a year

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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



PLEASANT STREET BRIDGE

For residents who were worried that the RI DOT would ignore the historic nature of the old Rumford Center and rebuild in a modern style we offer these photos of the finished bridge and surrounding parking area. The bridge detail is excellent and faithful to its original design and the cobblestone effect of the parking area is a fabulous touch! Thank you to RI DOT!



Dues Notice Last Call

If you are not current with your annual dues payment (notices were sent out July 2023), this November-December issue of the Gazette will be your last. Don't miss out on all that is happening in the EPHS community. As an all-volunteer organization, we rely on your support and generosity. Please consider renewing your membership by using the form on this page OR go to our website (ephist.org) and submitting your payment through Paypal.

Carole DiFabio, Chair, Membership Committee

Membership Form New Renewal/Change

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

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

John Hunt House Museum

We had a glorious Open House on October 8 with museum tours guided by our knowledgeable docents, genealogical research in the Education Center with Sandra Turgeon and Tom Warzeka; children's colonial games on the front lawn with Jack Richer and Fred Harrop; and a hike of the grounds led by Ernie Germani.

Since July we have showcased the well-received exhibits of East Providence's Amusement Parks. These exhibits will continue the 2nd Sunday of November and December. Ed Serowik (in the Education Center) and his son, Ed Serowik Jr. (in the Hunt House Museum) present an anecdotal history about the parks along with videos and a fascinating curated collection of memorabilia.

East Providence Cultural Center

On October 16 Mayor Bob DaSilva and architect David Sisson gave a presentation at City Hall about a proposed Cultural Center to be constructed at Hunt's Mills. The plans call for renovating the Caleb Williams/Lemuel Brown Cottage, which is the boarded up building on the right as you come down the long drive to the Hunt House. Also proposed is an addition of a new building behind the cottage that would include a reception area, exhibit space, bathrooms, presentation space and a conference room. The goal of the meeting was to get feedback, which was mixed, from the public about this early stage of design.



Who says toys have to be new to be fun?



Below: Ernie Germani (second from right) with tour group



An initial proposal for a cultural center as seen from the side of the cottage.



Headstones and History Bus Tour

On Saturday, October 21, the Weaver Library hosted two bus tours. Led by Michelle Perry, Public Services Librarian, the bus toured parts of the Ring of the Green and visited two historic cemeteries. Each of the tours stopped at the John Hunt House Museum for a mesmerizing presentation by Nancy Moore about John Hunt's 1716 gravestone.



UNION PRIMARY TOUR RECAP

The crowd was curious and came early to see how their former schoolhouse would now look as apartment space. About 70 people came through to talk with the architect David Sisson and project manager Tom Clayton - they seemed pleased with the results. Most votes for the favorite apartment: the front one bedroom which now includes the bell tower. Former principal Dave Kelleher sat in that semi-circular space for the evening, one of the official greeters. He has fought hard to save the school and it was gratifying to have him there to celebrate its new use. Joe MacDougald's 1st grade memories from the 1920s were on display as was Len Erikson's model of Union Primary. One resident brought his 3rd grade report card for viewing! We have visited since the tour and can attest that the landscaping now matches the detail of the interior.

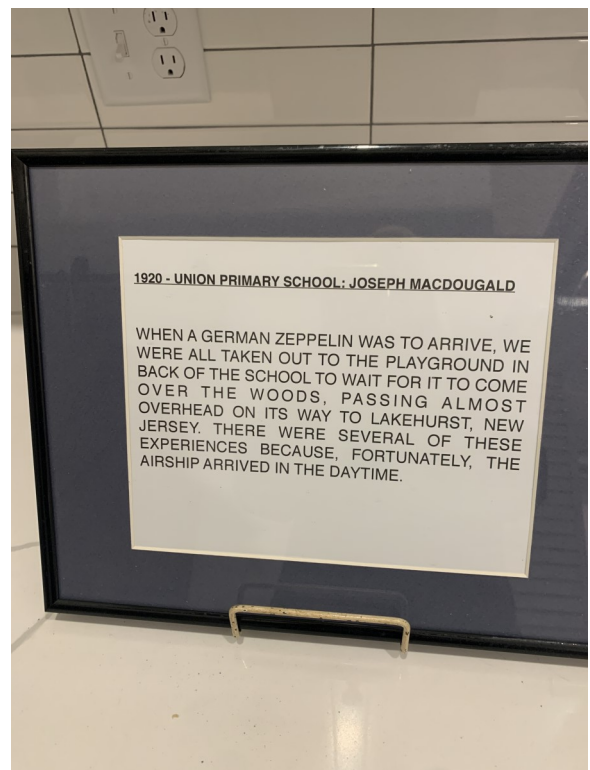


Above: Nancy Moore with former principal Dave Kelleher



Above and above right: some views of a typical kitchen

Right: One of many memories of the 1920s saved for posterity



**GENERAL MEETING: TOM BRUN PRESENTS - "LOVE" AT THE INDOOR COURT
WEAVER LIBRARY - Monday, December 11 - 6:30 pm**

We have lucked out as to the timing of Tom Brun's work to convince USTA (US Tennis Association) to place East Providence's own 1914 Indoor Court at 8 Blanding Avenue on its historic register. (The building was featured at the 2019 RI Preservation Conference here in East Providence.) Local tennis and preservation fans will learn about Tom's own research into the longest continuously used single court in the nation. The land for the court was bought by Lyra Brown Nickerson in 1913 and the court opened with a Tennis Ball on Oct. 31, 1914. Nickerson, who was a dynamic force in Providence society, died just two years later. The (Old) Red Bridge spanned the Seekonk at Waterman Avenue then, and it was very easy to reach the new barn-like structure just over the bridge in East Providence. The glass roof was a marvel and it boasted a linoleum floor, suitable for dancing. The Brun brothers, Tom and Steve, learned the game there with Ed Annelundi and bought him out eventually. Tom's stewardship of the building has been ongoing and rigorous, as those who play there can attest: no more carrying towels to mop floors

SOCIETY GIRL IS AVIATOR



Miss Lyra Brown Nickerson, who is to be the bride of Henry G. Clark of Providence, R. I., in her aviation costume. Miss Nickerson is an aviator, crack tennis player, swimmer and heiress to \$6,000,000. She recently announced her engagement to Henry G. Clark, assistant athletic director of Brown university, who has been described by President Faunce as a "nobel young man." Miss Nickerson recently came into prominence when she presented the Rhode Island National Guard with a fully-equipped aeroplane.



**WEALTHY SOCIETY GIRL
DIES FROM TYPHOID**

Narragansett Pier, R. I., Aug. 30. —Miss Lyra Brown Nickerson of Providence, one of the wealthiest young women in New England, died at her summer home here today after suffering from typhoid fever for two weeks. Miss Nickerson inherited a large estate from her father, Ward Nickerson. Her mother died some years ago. On August 1 announcement was made of Miss Nickerson's engagement to Henry G. Clark of Providence, assistant director of athletics at Brown University. The wedding was set for October 4.



Above right: The woman who made the court possible, who had a short but eventful life

Left: Tom on the court

Right and clockwise: The court as seen in the 1920s, 1990s and today.



Historian's Circle Giving Levels

- Hunt's Mills Park: \$1,000+
- Crescent Park: \$500+
- Vanity Fair Park: \$200+
- Boyden Heights Park: \$100+
- Friends: \$25+

Please apply my gift to:

- Annual Fund
- Endowment
- Split between the two

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Please place your phone camera over this PayPal bar code for payment.

Please make your checks payable to the East Providence Historical Society.

EP Historical Society Annual Fund

Thank you to those who gave to our 2022 Annual Fund. Your generous gifts were used to help meet our goals in the 2023 calendar year. Thank you to those who are considering a donation this year!

Below is a list of what your gift will support in calendar year 2024.

General Operating Support

- Operating expenses of the John Hunt House Museum.
- Maintain and host monthly Open Houses at the John Hunt House Museum and Education Center.
- Provide monthly educational programs for adults and children.

Endowment Goals

- Continue to build our Endowment
- Annual draw to offset costs
- Endowment gifts matched 2:1 for the first \$2,000

HISTORIAN'S CIRCLE

January 1 – December 31, 2023

Thank you to those who donated to our Annual fund. With your Historian's Circle gift, you are helping the Historical Society meet our annual, strategic and endowment goals for the 2023 calendar year.

Hunt's Mills Park: \$1,000 +

Angel Cabral	Cheryl & Jeff Faria
Hugh Kiley	Laurie & Bill McWeeney
Barbara Rix	Dotty Thornley
James N. Viara	Lois Williams

Crescent Park: \$500-\$999

Jacqueline and Lee Ashcraft	Hugh Kiley
Nancy and Dan Moore	Woods Heating Service

Vanity Fair Park: \$200-\$499

Nancy Allen	Earl Berwick
Richard R. Bushnell & Paula Perkins	David Czerwonka
Carole DiFabio & William Litchman	Hugh Kiley
Margaret Dooley	Virginia Neves
Darryl Hardern	Gonzalves
Elizabeth Ingraham	Pat Paulson McGrail
Jack and Kathy Richer	Mary and Steve Rosa

Boyden Heights Park: \$100-\$199

Gordon R. & Wendy L. Wood-Hubbard	
Barbara Barnes & Beverly Pettine	William Francis
Caroline D. Chick	Romeo DaSilva
Friends of Katherine Kazarian	Pam and Paul Goulet
Frederick F. Harrop	Miriam Kenney
Kathryn McGovern	Patricia McGrail
Tracey and Todd Moline	Bonney B. Sevellon
Ed and Paula Serowick	Charlene Underhill
Michael & Norma Reynolds	

Friends: \$25-\$99

American Ring Compan	Sandra Barber
Helen Archibald	James Boyd
Peter G. and Sandra M. Barilla	Ivan and Malinda Colon
James Boyd	Rebecca Ellis
Jane Dennison	Gilmore's Flower Shop
Gil Fletcher	DeDe Moubayed
Michele H. Kazarian	Ryan McCauley
Ruth McCarthy	Jayne Poland
Deb Ormerod	Jack and Kathi Savage
Mark Saunders	Betty Stoner
Candy Seel	Anthony Valerio
Lois Thompson	

Jean and Gary Zunda

Thank you!!!

If there are any errors or omissions in this list, please let Cheryl Faria know so we can correct it for the next issue of The Gazette. 401-419-8682 cherylafaria@verizon.net

Gardening tips from Jeff Faria

URI Master Gardener

Late fall is a great time to plant spring flowering bulbs, like crocuses, tulips, daffodils, snow drops, and such! They will give you a lift at the end of our upcoming winter. Add fertilizer, and compost to the planting holes before planting.

If acorns are signs of a harsh winter to come, we are in for a good one! Prepare now by tidying up and mulching tender perennials, cleaning gutters and downspouts and prepare winter snow removal tools. I use car wax on my snow shovels to make the job easier!

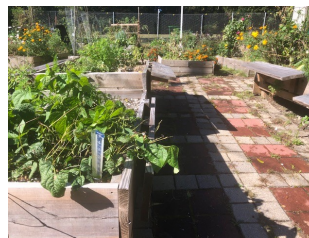
Use a fabric or sheet to cover flowers and fall crops from our first few frosts to extend their life and beauty.

Bring house plants that have enjoyed your patio outdoors, indoors before the first frost. They have been used to more rain this season, so watch for dryness during the winter and water accordingly. If leaves begin to droop, move to a sunny location in your home.

Mulch your October planted garlic before the ground freezes. Leaves and salt marsh hay are the best mulch. Salt marsh hay needs salt water to germinate. Hay will have lots of seeds that will germinate and cause trouble next spring.

Community Gardens and Garden Center Clean Up

The Community Gardens have had a successful and bountiful season. Now the gardeners are preparing their gardens for the winter. On October 8 a group of URI Master Gardeners and Community Gardeners gathered to clean up the Garden Center and to prepare for the 2024 growing season. Led by Jackie Allen and Ann Fletcher, the gardeners washed and sterilized pots, organized seeds and swept out the Garden Center.



The gardens in Autumn



Pot-cleaning for Spring

See you again in 2024!!



East Providence Historical Society
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