

Annual 2013 Meeting President's Report  
August 8, 2013

I am pleased to welcome you to the 101st Annual Meeting of the Jamestown Historical Society.

We have had an incredibly busy and productive 100th year.

We began the year with wonderful talk and photo presentation by Archie Clarke on the history of the Jamestown Ferries 1837-1969 at our Annual Meeting last August.

Our House Tour Weekend in September was a very successful and popular event. Betsy and Clark Moody hosted the Members only preview party at their beautifully restored home on Conanicus Avenue. Over 118 attendees were treated to a beautiful home, on a clear late summer evening, with spectacular views of the bay from the first floor and the wonderful front porch. The next day, Mike and Terry Lanza and the Leonard Family generously opened their unique homes to us for house tours. Visitors enjoyed the Jenny Lippitt Cottage, now called Stonewall Cottage built in 1873 and the Corbit Lovering cottage built in 1911-1912. We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Moody's, the Lanza's, and the Leonard's for generously sharing their homes with us for our House Tour Weekend.

Our annual volunteer party was held at Ken Newman's lovely home at the West Ferry in October. We gratefully appreciated the gracious welcome extended to us that evening. Good food, grand company, and a spectacular sunset combined for a great party enjoyed by over 88 of our volunteers.

Also in October, The Rhode Island Preservation & Heritage Commission and Preserve Rhode Island presented the JHS with the very prestigious Antoinette F. Downing Volunteer Service Award at the Rhody Awards which was held at Rosecliff in Newport. This award was given to us in recognition of the "generations of devoted volunteers for ongoing stewardship, building preservation, interpretation, and outreach over the past 100 years. It was a wonderful evening at which we felt so honored to receive the award while remembering the hard work, dedication, and support of countless members of the Society whose willingness to volunteer, over the years, made it possible.

In early November, we learned that we had been selected to receive a grant for \$27,205.00 from the Champlin Foundations for the installation of compact shelving in the Jamestown Historical Society's vault which is located in the basement of our Town Hall. The movable shelving increased our storage capacity in our climate controlled vault from 217 linear feet to 651 linear feet. Thanks to the hard work of our very dedicated Collection's committee, I am pleased to report the project has been completed and has resulted in a vast improvement in the efficiency and usability of that space.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Champlin Foundations for providing us with almost all the funds needed for this project. If you were unable to attend the "open house" we hosted in June, and would like to see it, please feel free to stop by on a Tuesday or Thursday morning for a tour.

In February we learned that we had been selected by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities to receive a grant of \$11,600.00 to upgrade the signage throughout the inside of the Windmill. The improvements will also include the establishment of a small exhibit about the Mill's history and a further explanation of how the mill operates which will be located on the second floor of the Mill. It is also our intension to install some unobtrusive lighting in the mill that will allow our visitors and docents to see the new signs and exhibit better and will also highlight the gears as well as the unique construction of the bonnet. The cost of the lighting is not covered by the grant but, we feel, is a crucial aspect for the successful outcome of this project. Thank you to The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities for their generous financial contribution to this venture. Rosemary Enright, who wrote the grant request, will serve as project manager. Our goal is to have this completed by Windmill Day 2014.

We had a group of third graders tour the Conanicut Battery in February. On April 29th, the Girl Scout Daisy Troop 621 visited the windmill grounds. Their leader submitted a photo of them against the east wall to the Jamestown Press which was featured on the front page, "above the fold" in the May 2, 2013 edition. Jamestown School's fifth grade visited the Mill and Meetinghouse in May and delighted us with their enthusiasm and questions. We also maintained a series of exhibits in the display cases at the Jamestown Library and also at the Jamestown School--Lawn throughout the year. Our outreach continued with the monthly "Jamestown Historical Society News" column by Rosemary Enright, the "This Week in Island History" column by Sue Maden, and a series of very interesting articles on Jamestown's history, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Society, by Enright and Maden which have appeared in the Jamestown Press.

In May we sponsored our biennial Battery Day at the Conanicut Battery where we enjoyed the Jamestown Community Band, the raising of the British, French, and American flags in honor of the three nations that manned the fort at different times in the Battery's history, a skirmish between reenactors, an interesting talk about the history of the Battery by Norman Demariais, Del's Lemonade, and a real sense of pride and patriotism throughout the program.

Our work in maintaining and improving Conanicut Battery park continues, thanks to a legislative grant sponsored by Theresa Piava-Weed. The goal is to establish a "view corridor" which will allow visitors to experience a view of the West Passage to better understand the vantage point

the Battery provided the soldiers who served there when it was occupied. We also have a new trail thanks to an Eagle Scout project designed and built by Zachary Neronha last spring called the North Loop.

June began with our Centennial Gala held at Onarock which is owned by Steve and Tricia Frary who have been meticulously restoring this magnificent home during the past five years. A recreation of an evening in 1912 was the theme the Gala Committee focused on which they accomplished in a most splendid manner. Guests, many in period costumes, enjoyed music, artwork, floral arrangements, dancing, and even a signature champagne cocktail from that era. It was a wonderful party which was a most fitting culmination of our 100th anniversary celebrations. Special thanks to the Frarys for their gracious hospitality and to the Centennial Gala Committee for creating such an outstanding event.

Both the Windmill and Museum opened in mid-June. There is a wonderful exhibit,-- Architectural Styles of Jamestown, 1700 - 1950 at the museum curated by Jim Buttrick which gives us a fascinating look at the dominant and diverse architectural styles of homes and other buildings in Jamestown over the centuries. This exhibit was funded, in part, by a Legislative Grant sponsored by our State Representative, Deb Ruggiero. If you have not seen it, I would certainly urge you to do so.

At the end of June we received great news from the Newport Restoration Foundation Doris Duke Fund that a grant of \$3000.00, of the \$3600.00 needed, had been awarded to us for the installation of a vapor barrier under the Meetinghouse which should help control the moisture in the crawlspace from seeping into the building. This course of action was recommended by two separate sources that have expertise in correcting this type of problem. We are very grateful to the Newport Restoration Foundation Doris Duke Fund for their financial assistance.

A brief report on the Society's finances: As of December 31, 2012, our operating assets, controlled by the JHS Finance Committee, were \$198,253.00. The Battery Endowment, also controlled by the JHS Finance Committee is \$32,000.00. Our endowment assets, controlled by the RI Foundation total \$322,735.00. The RI Foundation funds generated approximately 22% of the revenue needed to fund the Society's operations in 2012. The endowment funds held by third parties provided approximately \$7000.00 in 2012 for the maintenance at the Windmill and Meetinghouse. We also received a R.I. Foundation mini-grant from the Jamestown Community Fund for Historic tourism which enabled us to print a walking tour brochure of Narragansett Avenue and to install signs that mark George Washington's trip across Jamestown along Narragansett Avenue. To continue our archive preservation, we received a R. I. Council for the Humanities mini Grant and a R. I. Foundation Ott Fund grant. The total revenues for our fiscal year which ended December 31, 2012 were \$84,513.00 and the total expenses were \$47,327.00. Copies of the 12/31/12 financial reports are available upon request.

Our Annual House Tour Weekend will take place in the West Ferry area of Jamestown in September. On Friday, September 13th the "Members only" preview party will be held at Thorncroft. A lovely home, built before the Civil War, that has seen many unique changes over the years, including the planting of rare trees and shrubs in the late 19th century, several of which still adorn this beautiful property. The cost is \$40.00 per person, which includes a ticket valued at \$20.00 for the tours on Saturday. Invitations will be mailed to JHS members shortly. If you are not a member and would like to attend, you are cordially invited to join the Society. The tour on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, features six sites, all within walking distance of each other. They include three homes built in the last quarter of the 19th century and three art studios. These should combine to give us a fascinating and interesting view of this quaint and picturesque neighborhood.

We have six members of the Board leaving us tonight. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them: Dick Allphin who has Chaired our Finance Committee for the past six years, Rosemary Enright who has served as Director, President, and Secretary during the past 11 years, and Sally Schott who has served on our Education Committee and Nominating Committee during the past six years are leaving due to the term limits in our bylaws. John Horton from our Communications Committee, Mary Heath who has Chaired our Programs Committee and worked on our Development Committee, and James Wright who as Co-Chaired our Development Committee are stepping down due to life commitments. The hard work and dedication that each of you have brought to the Board over the years has made us a much stronger and more vibrant organization. You should be very proud of the many contributions you have made to the JHS during your tenure. The Jamestown Historical Society is very grateful for your service.

To the remaining members of the Board: Judy Bell, Matthew Clarke, Tricia Evangelista, Larry McDonald, Betsy Moody, Heidi Keller Moon, Dianne Rugh, and Harry Wright, I would like to say it has been a pleasure working with you during this past year, and to thank you for the dedication and support you have given me personally and to the Society.

In closing, I want to thank the many volunteers--over 150--who have given their time and talents to the JHS during the past year. You are the heart and soul of the Jamestown Historical Society and we are so fortunate that you are willing to help us fulfill the Society's mission to collect, preserve, and share with others the rich and wonderful history of Conanicut, Dutch, and Gould Islands.