



Jamestown Historical Society

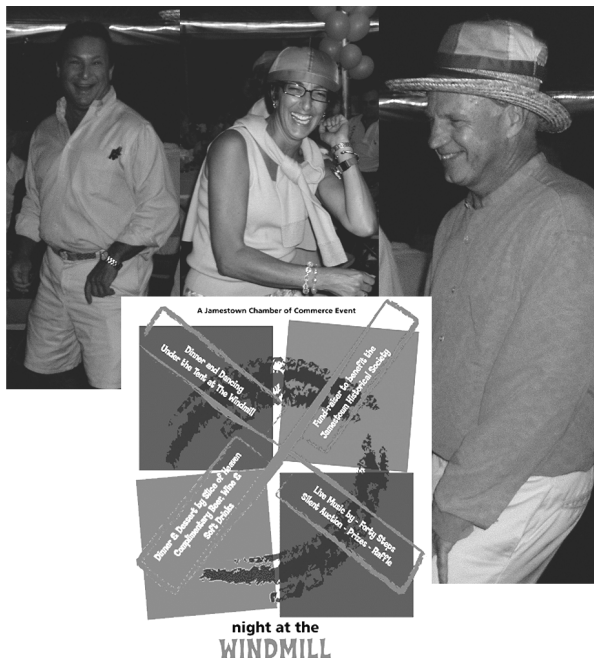
# HERITAGE

Fall 2006

*To collect, preserve, and share with others the heritage of Jamestown, Rhode Island.*

## Night at the Mill

On Saturday, August 19, the historic Jamestown windmill was the star of the *Night at the Mill* fundraiser, hosted by the Jamestown Chamber of Commerce. The event was great fun – and proved to be very profitable for both the Chamber of Commerce and the society. The mill was open at the beginning of the evening and many of the 250+ people who attended the event came inside for a tour. It was a beautiful night and the view of the Newport Bridge was exquisite. The food was delicious, and dancing under the tent in the windmill field was a blast.



*A Night at the Windmill was fun for all and raised more than \$5,000 for the Jamestown Historical Society*

## President's Message

**By Rosemary Enright**

### Long Range Plan

In the Spring newsletter, your Board announced the society's Long Range Plan. The plan addresses the need for the society to expand, maintain, and upgrade its facilities – particularly the Jamestown Museum – and to increase its outreach activities if it is to continue to fulfill its mission successfully. These continue to be a significant challenge.

During this summer, we have focused on positioning the society to move quickly down the path toward implementing the recommendations in the plan and have taken the following steps:

- We executed a 99-year lease with the town for the museum building. By legally ensuring that we will be able to continue to occupy the building, the lease puts us in a position to invest in the environmental controls that are essential to safeguarding our collections as well as to make other structural changes.
- Our former president, Bill Burgin, has agreed to be our architect, and we are working with him to determine the renovations that would modernize the museum while still preserving its historical integrity.

(continued page 2)

- We have agreed in principle with the town on two additions to the new Town Hall: we will donate a display case for the permanent display of the Land Agreement document and we will build a vault in the basement. The vault will be for the use of the society for a minimum of 20 years.
- We have formed a Capital Campaign Committee to oversee fund-raising for the projects and have begun applying for grants from foundations interested in helping us.

In addition to these concrete actions to upgrade our facilities, we have begun revamping our by-laws and reassessing our outreach activities.

- Harry Wright has taken the lead on the task of evaluating how – and how well – the organization is functioning at the administrative level. We are all volunteers and the constituency of the Board changes annually. Strong but flexible rules are needed to ensure we work effectively.
- You may notice as you read the committee reports that we have increased our programming for younger people. In addition, a file cabinet for the storage of historical artifacts has been donated to the school – the first step in establishing a facility where teachers may bring their students in groups for hands-on, close-up presentations of items from the society's collection and where students may conduct their own research and study of Jamestown history.
- And finally, a committee is being formed to define a Business Plan to ensure that the society can maintain the envisioned improvements over the years to come. Improved programming and exhibits, building maintenance, and outreach will require increased funding and, in some cases, professional help. We need to prepare ourselves for these challenges.

Each fall we welcome to our board the new members and say thank you to those who are leaving. This year we have three new board member and one person who is shifting his area of responsibility. Dick Allphin has moved from his director chair to take on the role of secretary for the society; Greg DiGaspar, Deb Foppert, and Mary Heath were elected to the board at our August meeting. Greg immediately took an active role as the chair of Building and Grounds, overseeing all the end of season activities necessary to secure our facilities for the winter. Deb is applying her legal skills to helping Harry Wright revamp our by-laws. Mary, our new Programs chair, is brainstorming ideas for spring and summer events. Please let her know what events you would be interested in.

We also have a couple of “good byes” to say.

Joe Logan completed two terms on the Board and cannot according to the by-laws come back immediately for a third. Joe has been invaluable both as chair of Building and Grounds and as a member of the Collections committee. He brought our cataloging into the digital age – selecting the cataloging software, translating existing records to the new format, photographing objects, and so much more. I'm not saying good-bye – I'll see him at the Collection committee meetings.

Maureen McGuirl and Mary Jane Murphy are also leaving the board. They've worked hard this past year as co-chairs for Programs and did a wonderful job pulling together our various events, as you will read in the Program committee report. Maureen has agreed to be our liaison with the school as we continue to reach out to our younger Jamestowners.

And finally Jane Miner is taking a break after 20 years serving as Board member, president, secretary, and membership coordinator. There really isn't any way to thank her for all that she has done for the society. So I'll just say thank you from all of us.

## Windmill Committee

**By Linnea Petersen**

The windmill had a wonderful season!

It began in June with 52 second-graders from the Matunick Beach School who included our mill as part of their class trip. They had studied small engines and gears in class. Needless to say, they were very impressed with our “gears”! One boy, who was very bright and equally dramatic, looked up into the bonnet—and exclaimed “This place is Sooooo HISTORIC – IT HAS COBWEBS AND EVERYTHING!”

The *Night at the Mill* in August was the highlight of summer. Many members attended. Paul and Linnea Petersen greeted visitors at the mill, and Harry Wright welcomed and thanked the Chamber of Commerce for the society. See page 1 for more.

September 16 was Hey Day at Dutra’s farm and the mill was opened in conjunction with that event thanks to Bill and Ellen House, Rosemary Enright, and Paul Petersen, who served as docents. The Hey Day committee built a stile over the wall between the Dutra field south of the windmill and the windmill field. A horse-drawn wagon carried people from the activities at the farm across the fields to the stile. The wagon rides were very popular, especially with families, so we had a steady stream of visitors throughout the day.

Our last “special event” was a visit to the windmill by 60 members of the New England Association of City and Town Clerks on November 16. The group was attending a conference in Newport and was invited to Jamestown by our Town Clerk, Arlene Petit. The Jamestown Historical Society provided tour guides, Jim Buttrick and Harry Wright, who joined the tour at the Town Hall. The next stop was the Library, where Harry Wright and Rosemary

Enright explained the history of the Conanicut Land Agreement and described its acquisition by the society. Harry and Jim accompanied the tour to Beavertail and back to the windmill. Jim demonstrated to some how the grindstone was raised and lowered while others climbed to the bonnet to look at the gears and the view.

We had over 250 visitors who came during the weekends we were opened this summer. This, of course, would not have happened without the enthusiasm and dependability of our docents to whom I am most grateful: Dick Allphin, Jane Bentley, Whit Brown, Jim Buttrick, Ennis Chestang, Isabel Coyle, Rosemary Enright, Marcia Glassie, Brookie Harding, Ellen & Bill House, Bob Kinder, Bob Kinzel, John & Teddy Leyon, Sue Maden, Kathy Maloney, Carlton “Pede” Manchester, Jane Miner, Bruce Murray, Marion Pierce, Bill Smith, Carol Todd, and Skip Walls.

**Thank you** for volunteering. It would be great if we could expand our season—perhaps until Columbus Day. This can happen easily if more people sign up to serve as docents at the Mill. Please call me at 423-1820 if you would be willing to help in this effort.



*Linnea Petersen, Windmill committee chair, greeted guests at the door for the Night at the Mill.*

## ***Program Committee***

***By Maureen McGuirl and Mary Heath***

Our first event for this summer – the Discover Jamestown day planned for the children in the Jamestown middle school – had to be cancelled because of rain. We'll try again. Encouraging our children's interest in the past is a very important part of the society's mission.

### **Walks through Downtown Jamestown**

The weather on July 22, the day for Jane Bentley's tours of downtown Jamestown, was a little iffy, too, but the show went on. As usual, Jane's history of the town brought the scene alive for her listeners. Barry Cook and Nick Schaus captured her talk on film and are planning to include portions in their video history of Narragansett Avenue.

In the fall, the tour was reprised for Brownie troop 612. The girls began their tour in the historic graveyard at Four Corners where Maureen McGuirl introduced them to Jamestown history by showing them how to take rubbings of the gravestones. Jane Bentley then led them on a walk down to East Ferry, telling them about the many varying purposes the different buildings had served. We are very grateful to Jane for conducting both of these tours.

### **Annual Meeting**

At the society's annual meeting in August, John Murphy entertained the members with his reminiscences about growing up in Jamestown in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. He challenged the society to reach out to the whole population of Jamestown, particularly the youth. Barry Cook filmed the event, and both the talk and the filming generated renewed interest in oral history and capturing the memories of our long-time residents. Mary Jane Murphy very ably coordinated this event

## **House Tour**

For our house tour, Jamestown artist Alexandra Kent opened her home at 170 Walcott Avenue. The house, designed by Charles Bevins, was built for Elizabeth Clarke in 1895-1896. More recently it belonged to Alexandra's grandparents, Reinier and Lisa Beeuwkes,. James Buttrick, an authority on Bevins, provided invaluable insight into the structure of the house and how it reflected the Bevin's style. His architectural knowledge augmented personal information from the Beeuwkes family and Alexandra Kent, who shared papers written by Lisa Beeuwkes about Elizabeth H. Clark.

Thank you to volunteers Jane Bentley, Alexandra Kent, and Nancy Logan who collaborated with board members Rosemary Enright, Sue Maden, Maureen McGuirl, and Mary Jane Murphy to provide a tour that combined family and architectural history.

### **Volunteers Appreciation Party**

As usual, the end of our summer season brought with it the Volunteers Appreciation Party. This year, Brookie Harding hosted the party and we thank her greatly for opening her home to us. Over 50 of the people who work to make your society successful attended. We all had a great time. If you want to attend next year's party, all you need to do is volunteer as a greeter at the windmill or the museum or get involved in one of the many projects that the different committees of the society are sponsoring.

### ***Holiday Craft Fair***

Look for the **Jamestown Historical Society** table at the Holiday Craft Fair

Melrose School  
Saturday, December 2.

Books	Tiles	Mugs
Give a membership		Pay your dues

## Collections Committee

**By Sue Maden and Harry Wright**

The Collections committee has met monthly. The members are Rosemary Enright, Joe Logan, Sue Maden, Linda Warner, and Harry Wright.

### Exhibits

More than 300 people visited the Museum this summer to view the special exhibit, *Jamestown's Volunteers: Our Fire and Rescue Teams*, and the permanent ferry exhibit. The special exhibit was organized and prepared by Brookie Harding with the help of Ken Caswell from the Jamestown Fire Department and Cheryl Serpa from the Jamestown Emergency Medical Services (JEMS).

The society is most grateful to Lee Howard who arranged the docent schedule. The volunteers this year were Joyce and Dick Allphin, Rita Antine, Carolyn Armington, Judy Bell, Jane Bentley, Joan Briggs, Leo Brown, Bill Burgin, Ellie Chase, Marcy Coleman, Rosemary Enright, Marcia Glassie, Emma Graham, Eleanor Gravdahl, Janie Harris, Dick Hines, Ginger Holland, John Horton, Varoujan and Rose Karentz, Bob Kinder, Bill Knapp, Anne Lane, Teddy and John Leyon, Anne and Bruce Livingston, Dian Luth, Sue Maden, Maureen McGuirl, Bruce



*This year's museum exhibit featured the history of Jamestown's volunteer fire and rescue groups.*

Murray, John Murphy, Ken Newman. Gloria O'Laughlin, Roland Parent, Marion Pierce, Betty Purdum, Sav Rebecchi, Ginny Saunders, Debbie Slattery, Betty Ann Taylor, Carol Todd, Shirley Utterback, Linda Warner, Mary and Dennis Webster, B.J. Whitehouse, Jason Wiles, Harry Wright, and Ann Zartler. Sue Potter's labors to improve the garden in front of the Museum are also much appreciated.

Planning has started for the 2007 exhibit. The exhibit, being organized in conjunction with the R.I. Public Archeology Lab (PAL), will document the demolition of the Jamestown Bridge.

### Library Display Case

Last spring the society donated a case to the Jamestown Philomenian Library so that we could have a year-round venue for display of our collections. Our first topic was the Jamestown Bridge dedication in 1940. This summer we featured Jamestown's summer resort hotels from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Recently we mounted an exhibit of ferryboat models.



*Ferryboat models*

The display will be changed every two or three months, so don't forget to take a look as you enter or leave the library. The case is in the library lobby in front of the passthrough to the children's room.

### Cataloging

Cataloging our collection and transferring existing records to our computerized system has been a major drive this year. As of November 1, the number of records created were: archives, 1,254; objects, 778; and photographs, 4,226. The society is fortunate to have so many devoted volunteers to work on the

## Donations, May through October, 2006

Robert Allen (son of Evelyn Gladding): book of poems by Winthrop Wilson; *The Great Hurricane and Tidal Wave. Rhode Island. September 21. 1938*, edited by the Providence Journal.

Craig Amerigan: photo and biographical data on August Pimentel, Jamestown pugilist with 375 professional fights.

Judy Bell: an EMS patch.

Frank W. Birney: photographs of the Birney family in Jamestown, 1903-1904.

Becky Ryder Carey: biographical information and photograph of Captain Richard Allen Smith Ryder.

Ken Caswell: CD with miscellaneous photographs of the Jamestown Fire Department.

Central Baptist Church: Jamestown Bridge demolition t-shirt with a cartoon by Don Bousquet.

Scott Cunningham: wooden pillow block from the windmill.

Beeuwkes family (Elizabeth Beeuwkes Cook): papers, notebooks and photographs about the Conanicut Golf Club and the Cottrell Pier Association.

John Howard: pieces of sheathing from the windmill; books on Seacoast Fortifications, Hurricane Carol, and Army Engineers in New England, 1775-1975.

Jamestown Rotary Club: t-shirt from the 2005 bicycle race, t-shirt and hat from the 2006 race.

Friends of the Volunteers, Jamestown Volunteer Fire Department & Ambulance Association: t-shirt.

Dorrie Linn: World War II Red Cross volunteer dress, cap and pin.

Joe Logan: photos on CDs of demolition of Jamestown Bridge; demolition of town building on West Street; moving of town hall; Ferry room exhibit, 2006 exhibit.

Nancy Logan: *The Plum Beach Light. The Birth, Life, and Death of a Lighthouse* by Lawrence Bradner; copy of 1657 Land Agreement and related articles.

Sally Lyddane: *The Great Hurricane and Tidal Wave. Rhode Island. September 21, 1938*, edited by the Providence Journal, in memory of James (Ken) Kenneth and Ethel Lawler, formerly of Springfield. Worcester and South Dennis, MA.

Sue Maden: Jamestown Bridge demolition t-shirt, Jamestown Bridge prayer for dashboard, branding iron with name of J Anderegg, Jamestown millennium photo.

Dave Martin: book *Dismissed with Prejudice* by Mary Stearns McGaughan and Terrence F. McGaughan.

Edward Morinho: two signs from the 300<sup>th</sup> celebration in 1957; in memory of the 300<sup>th</sup> celebration committee.

Katherine Smith Murphy: scrapbook on the Jamestown Bridge dedication.

PAL: CD with 1938 contract documents for the Jamestown Bridge.

J. Carlyle Parker: author of book donated, *Rhode Island Biographical and Genealogical Sketch Index*.

Pezzuco Construction: three tax records found while demolishing the front room of the town hall.

Sue Potter: t-shirt from Conanicut Art Association 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Show.

Rhode Island Department of Transportation: rivets, anchor bolt and bearing pin from the Jamestown Bridge; Joseph B. Fay t-shirt on the bridge demolition.

T. Rowley: Jamestown Bridge demolition party t-shirt.

Linda Warner: documents related to the opening of the Industrial National Bank in 1958; photos conveyed by Ethel Kitts from the 1960s of the windmill.

Harry Wright: cookbook issued in 1968 by Fidelis, Central Baptist Church.

cataloging. These included Dick Allphin, John Howard, Carol Lake, Mary Jane Murphy, Arlene Petit, and Sharon Price, as well as the members of the collections committee.

This past summer Lauren Thacker, a summer intern from Holy Cross University, accomplished a great deal in cataloging objects and applying accession numbers. Bill Knapp helped in the latter task, and Donald Richardson was generous with his time by helping to identify objects in the ferry exhibit. This fall there are two new volunteers tackling significant collections — Nancy Logan is working on the library and Holly Collins on the society's records.

## Caring for the Collections

Proper storage for the collections has been addressed in several ways.

- Textiles, after being cataloged, have accession numbers sewn inside them, are wrapped in special tissue paper and then are stored in archival textile storage boxes. Our thanks to Judy Knight who continues with this task.
- Objects have been packed in special boxes. Bill Knapp, Carol Lake and Gaye Hill helped with this task.
- Sue Maden completed an online course in the "Basics of Archives," which qualifies the society to apply for grants from the R.I. State Archives.

## ***Publications Committee***

***By John Horton***

In 2004, the Board set a goal to make the society's collections more accessible and to secure them for posterity by using the latest digital technology.

Today, two years later, after hundreds of hours of volunteer work, we are a long way toward achieving those goals and progress continues. The Collections committee has been very busy computerizing the catalog of our collections and photographing the objects. The Jamestown Historical Society's website now allows access to this catalog. The descriptive records and photographs are available over the World Wide Web at <http://jamestownhistoricalsociety.org>.

When you go to the web site, click **Collections** in the left hand menu. You will be taken to the screen pictured below. Click on **View JHS's Collections Online**. From there you can browse the Photograph, Object, or Archive collections or search the catalog using keywords. We are still working on our keyword search, which can be slow.

By making the collection more available, we have also made it more secure. We have created digital images at different levels of fidelity, separately stored. A high quality image for archival

### **Jamestown Historical Society's Collections**

[View JHS's  
Collections  
Online](#)



Go to [www.jamestownhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.jamestownhistoricalsociety.org) to view our collection of photographs and historical objects.

preservation and security allows us to reproduce the material for research purposes while keeping the often fragile originals in safe storage. This is particularly critical for photographs and paper archives, but is also a safeguard in case of theft. A medium fidelity image is useful for printing and distribution, while the lower quality image is sufficient for on-line viewing.

Note that the society has a new email address: [jhs@jamestownri.com](mailto:jhs@jamestownri.com). Please drop us a line.

## ***Buildings and Grounds Committee***

***By Greg DiGasper***

All buildings owned or maintained by the society came through the summer season without a problem. Our new alarm system in the museum is working well after some false alarms generated by a family of spiders that made its home in the front door motion detector. The meetinghouse shows signs of powder post beetle activity – a problem we have faced before – and a spring treatment is planned.

The inside of the museum will be seeing some changes. The current arrangement with two large display units dividing the front room of the building into two rooms won't accommodate the proposed 2007 Jamestown Bridge exhibit. Joe Logan is putting casters under the dividers to allow them to be easily repositioned. This flexibility will be useful for future exhibits, too.

An autumn clean-up of the Battery was done by Cub Scout Pack 1 during their campout there in October. In addition to trash, the boys unearthed some antique bottles that they presented to the society. In the spring, a more involved clean-up by both the Cub Scouts and the Boy Scouts is proposed. A knowledgeable member of the historical society will be on hand to salvage any finds.

***Officers and Directors  
2006 – 2007***

President	Rosemary Enright
Vice President	Harry Wright
Secretary	Dick Allphin
Treasurer	Marion Pierce
Directors to 2007	Dick Hines John Horton Ken Newman
Directors to 2008	Deborah Foppert Sue Maden Linnea Petersen
Directors to 2009	Mary Heath Greg DiGasper

***Committee Chairs  
2006 – 2007***

Windmill	Linnea Petersen
Collections Co-chairs	Sue Maden Harry Wright
Building & Grounds	Greg DiGasper
Program	Mary Heath
Finance	Dick Hines
Publications	John Horton

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