



Richmond Reflections

Vol. 45 No. 2 The Richmond Historical Society Newsletter Summer 2019

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I write this message with a good deal of sadness. During the last two months, we have lost three stalwart members of our group: Patty Millar Betty Mowchan, and John Colozzi.

Patty was a founding member in 1968, and served for many years as Archivist during which she accessioned hundreds of documents and took many oral histories. Her contribution was monumental and the archives are based on her attention to detail. When she became ill, she was replaced by Betty who helped us enter the computer age for document accession. John, a life-member, was active in plaquing the Old Stone Dam in Lower Hope Valley. He was a source of much oral history. We are the lesser in their loss.

After some thirty years as President, I will not stand for re-election at the Annual Meeting to be held on June 20th at the Clark Library. I will work with the new President to assure a smooth transition.

We are in need of volunteers. First, we need a new President or at least a new officer to fill a space if someone moves up. Second, we need a Program Director. In the past year, I have arranged for the quarterly speakers. As I write this we have no speaker for the fall. Third, we need an Assistant Treasurer. Someone to work with our present Treasurer and be

prepared to handle the finances when the present Treasurer retires.

The membership must help to make our Society work. It seems to me that membership connotes an obligation to support the group to which one belongs. Perhaps I am an idealist.

In closing, I thank you for your past support and wish the Society a robust and productive future.

Richard Wolke

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the RHS

The annual meeting of The Richmond Historical Society was held June 21, 2018 at Clark Memorial Library. In attendance were, Dave Johnson, Richard & Johanna Wolke, Ron & Betty Mowchan, Virginia Williams, Roberta Whelan, Kristen Chambers, Reinhard Straub, Susan & Talia Jalette, Carolyn Richard and Richard Millar.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 by President Johnson.

Reports of Officers

R. Wolke made a motion to accept the minutes as posted online, seconded by B. Mowchan. All approved.

The Treasurer presented her report; the Endowment Account balance is \$8,546.51. Total expenses for the year were \$928.34. A motion was made by B. Mowchan, seconded by R. Mowchan to accept the report, all approved.

Vice-President R. Wolke will present his report later in the meeting.

President Johnson announced he will step down as President but plans to remain active in the Society. He announced that Mark Trimmer is donating some display cases to the Society; he and Mark will move them to the Bell School. Also discussed was the Richmond Heritage Trail, 47 acres, and the Knowles Mill site in Shannock. President Johnson suggested members visit these historical sites.

Reports of Committees

Archives - Betty reported she, Kristen, and Kate remain busy. The web site has been attracting attention. In 2017, 9 people visited the archives, 2 phone inquiries, 19 emails and 2 web site queries were responded to. So far this year, 15 people have made contact. Kristen keeps the Facebook page updated and active, photos of this meeting will be posted. Betty updates the web site often to keep it fresh and interesting. Patty Millar's presence is missed.

Building/Museum- President Johnson noted there is mold or mildew on the building; he has contacted Andre Hartt for his opinion and is waiting for a response. The building has recently been open on Saturdays; Betty & Ron did some cleaning and a Memorial Day display was set up using material from WWI & WWII. Also, Lauri Arruda held a signing of her book, Richmond RI Historical Cemeteries; seven copies of the book were sold. R. Wolke, K. Chambers, B. Mowchan and C. Richard volunteered to open the building on Saturdays. Kristen suggested that visitors, in addition to signing the log book, include their email address. President Johnson discussed the possibility of putting bunting on the building.

Richmond Historic Cemeteries Committee - The Committee report was read by B. Mowchan, Dory Wagner was absent. In her report, Dory noted the Committee has been busy; two cemeteries have been cleaned, in addition 6 more were cleaned thru community service requirements and Eagle Scouts. There may be a newly discovered cemetery off James Trail, Dory is planning to visit the site next week. Volunteers are always needed for numerous projects. Dory will gladly meet with anyone interested in joining the group.

Old Business

Carolyn presented the current membership list, she asked members to contribute any updates if needed.

New Business

Election of Officers

Nominations from the floor - none

Present Slate:

President - R. Wolke

Vice President - K. Chambers

Secretary - J. Wolke

Treasurer - C. Richard

Members at Large - V. Williams, D. Wagner, and D. Johnson

Motion made by B. Mowchan, seconded by R. Mowchan to accept the slate presented.
All Approved.

President R. Wolke thanked D. Johnson for his service. Dave oversaw the restoration work to the Bell School, sent members email about RI history, kept contact with other Chariho societies, encouraged the digitalization of the archives and was active in the formation of the Richmond Heritage Trail.

Fundraising - State Grant application, Bell School improvements and programs were discussed.

Regarding the Newsletter, M. Ford met with R. Wolke and K. Chambers. They agreed the Newsletter be published four times a year. The Newsletter should contain historical information, essays and news of the Society and its members. Members agreed to electronic publication with some hard copies sent to several members and another left at the library for patrons to read.

The possibility of publishing another issue of Driftways was discussed. Many issues to be settled, a committee must be formed to decide how to best proceed.

K. Chambers volunteered to do publicity.

The state grant application was filed by C. Richard. The amount requested is \$2,000. No word yet on status.

Fundraising - Discussion on various methods. It was agreed to survey members as to their opinion, also post something in the Newsletter.

Question posed by President Wolke as to what to do with the Old Town Clerk's Office in Carolina; it has been painted, now what?

Public Forum

Dave wondered about turning the electricity on in the Bell School. Perhaps a small generator could be purchased or borrowed to help give the building a good cleaning, a vacuum cleaning is needed, hence electricity.

Motion made by V. Williams, seconded by B. Mowchan, all approved.
Meeting adjourned at 8pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Johanna Wolke
Secretary

News from the Past

Helping out in the Archives, I constantly come across items of interest to distract me from task. A familiar name, place, event, etc. catches the eye. While searching through the Society's stash of newsletters for information on fire departments for an inquirer, my eye landed on the name of the Rev. Elder Daniel Davis, who has been mentioned in a couple of our most recent newsletters. The following information was from a 1974 article which highlighted a program that was held to honor 20 Richmond "Golden Agers", one of whom was Horace Riley.

From the RHS Newsletter, March 19, 1974:

Horace Riley, living in Richmond since 1887 in the same house, remembered some tales about the Reverend Elder Daniel Davis who is buried on the cemetery on his property. The Elder Davis died in 1904; he had been well known and respected in his earlier days, and as age took its toll the Town Council appointed the Rev. Warren Dawley who was Director of Public Health to oversee the care of Elder Davis during his last days. The Davis farm was sold to a man named West from Mystic who moved his furnishings the last mile (from the train) by hand with the help of Isaac Ellis, a neighbor. The old chimney was dirty and faulty and one day not long after the new owners had completely settled in, a fire started from the unclean chimney, burning the house to the ground.

Kristen Chambers

IN MEMORIAM

PATTY MILLAR

Patty Millar, former President and Archivist of the RHS, died in early April. Patty's involvement in the Richmond community impacted many organizations and lives, perhaps none so much as the Historical Society. A lifelong resident of Richmond, Patty knew just about everything about our town. If she didn't know, she would always find the answer. Before Patty assumed the role of Archivist, there wasn't much organization of all the paper, documents, and material owned by the Society relating to the history of Richmond. Most items were stored in the Bell School under very poor conditions with no easy access for the public. With the building of the new Clark Memorial Library, the Society was invited to use space there for an archive. Patty named the upstairs space "The Loft". This was the beginning of Patty's monumental work cataloguing and preserving masses of "stuff". Where to begin? Some of us remember the days before computers and marvel at the effort that went into designing an organized system, with cross-references no less, that would make it easy to find items. Patty's success in achieving this is amazing. Every notation is written

in Patty's legible, neat handwriting. Once word got out that the Archives existed, many people donated items. In typical Patty fashion, she would graciously receive an old book, a torn newspaper, or an old rusty farm implement that had seen better days. Frequently, visits or correspondence pertained to Genealogy. Now that there was an organized filing system, many questions could be answered. Betty Mowchan joined Patty in "The Loft". Working together, the two of them accessioned and entered into the computer items in the care of the Society. When she was finished for the day, Patty would often come downstairs to the office for a spot of tea. I have such fond memories of shared laughs and reminiscences with Patty. She was a lovely woman who made a great contribution, and she is missed by many.

Johanna Wolke

IN MEMORIAM

BETTY MOWCHAN

The Richmond Historical Society expresses deepest sympathy to the family of Betty Mowchan. Betty was a long time member and active volunteer in the RHS. She worked many years in the RHS archives, along with her good friend Patty Millar. Betty marvelled how before Patty's illness she had an incredible memory for the history of Richmond, its families and events, and Betty missed having her there. Betty took the archives into the 21st century by learning the Past Perfect online archiving system and starting the arduous task of entering the Society's holdings. If you needed information, Betty would scour the archives in search of it and if no answer were available, she would refer you to someone who would likely have it. If you needed something done, she was the one to ask, and it would get done.

Betty was involved in so many community activities throughout her life, including serving on the Richmond Town Council for four years in the 1990's, two of them as President. She and her husband Ron enjoyed traveling the world over. Seeing her and Ron together you could tell they were devoted to each other; not just a married couple, but best friends. Many of you knew Betty for years. I knew her for just over two short years as i assisted her in the archives as a fairly clueless "intern". I am grateful to Betty for her ever present patience, encouragement, and the wealth of knowledge which she willingly shared. She is truly missed.

Kristen Chambers

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the RHS will be held on Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 6:30 PM at the Clark Memorial Library. The business meeting will include the election of officers, review of Old Business and the past year's events, and New Business as we look to the future of the Society. We are looking to increase member participation in the Society. There are many ways that you can volunteer. We've created some new positions that need to be filled: Program Director and Hospitality Chair. The Program Director would be responsible for seeking out speakers and programs of interest. The Hospitality Chair would be in charge of coordinating volunteers to provide refreshments at events. We've tossed around the idea of having someone who is familiar with selling items on Ebay or the like to help sell items that are in the archives but that are not directly related to the town of Richmond. Our Treasurer, Carolyn Richard, is seeking an Assistant Treasurer. The Archives could use people willing to sort through clippings and organize files. Someone computer-savvy could be trained to use the PastPerfect program for digitally archiving the collection. In the summer months we'd like to again have the Bell School open for a few hours on Saturdays. Docents are needed on a scheduled basis to man the school and help with the display cases. As always, our Newsletter Editor, Susan Jalette, welcomes submissions to the quarterly newsletter from all members on subjects of local historical interest. The archives are available if you have a subject in mind that you'd like to research for a short article for the newsletter. These are just a few ideas we'll be talking about on June 20th. Come to the meeting with your ideas and suggestions, and a willingness to help the RHS grow!

Kristen Chambers

THE CLARKE FARM

In 1691, some nineteen years before the Shannock Purchase that encompassed a good portion of our Town of Richmond, Samuel Clarke (1672 - 1769) laid the foundation and dated the hearth of his farm on land transferred to him by his father Joseph, and land originally part of the Stanton Purchase (1669). Today, 328 years later, that farm still stands in all its beauty and and functionality. Its fields and stone walls present us with a unique and beautiful landscape.

Our town, incorporated in 1747, is indeed fortunate to have this historic site in Kenyon Village preserved by member and preservationist John Peixinho who purchased the farm in 2015. The farm reflects our agricultural heritage and is of such

importance that it was added to the National Register of Historic Places in February 2019.

Since 2015, John has done much to, as he puts it, 'stabilize' its buildings of which there are a number. Over the years, the farm was a working establishment and various accessory structures were added. Today there is a fine barn, a corn crib, carriage house, stone blacksmith shop, a stone root cellar, outhouse, and a one room schoolhouse. The school house is said to have been built in 1810 and moved from its original site (Stanton Corners) to the farm in 1840 and was in use until the 1880s. This building is presently undergoing restoration and perhaps some secrets as to its history may be uncovered.

The farmhouse has a gambrel roof which was continued on an addition in the 18th century. A massive stone chimney serving four fireplaces is situated in the center of the original building. The original windows are most interesting for their arrangement of panes varying from eight over twelve, to nine over six and twelve over twelve.

The Society thanks John for preserving this architectural gem in the village of Kenyon.

Richard Wolke

