

Castle Chronicle



Volume 9 Number 1 ■ Spring 2000

Published by the Cocumscussoc Association at Smith's Castle ■ 55 Richard Smith Drive ■ Wickford, Rhode Island 02852

Inside

2
President's
Note

3
Docents'
Activities

4
Colonial
Sixpence

5
Executive
Committee

6
Thank yous

Castle and Community Celebrate Well

On December 4 and 5, Smith's Castle roused some early holiday cheer with the Christmas at the Castle Open House. Outside the Castle the weather was warm and sunny, but inside the rooms displayed all the glow and spirit of a wintry Christmas day in old South County. Docents beautifully decorated the Castle with fresh greens and candles, and the smell of piping hot cider filled the rooms. Father Christmas presided in the historic kitchen. In the meeting room, docents sold cookies, cakes, pies, scones, and a variety of other homemade foods. The Junior Docents played host in the Richard Smith Room, involving visitors old and young in colonial games. They also demonstrated embroidery and weaving.

We appreciate the time contributed by area residents to provide the beautiful live music. Cello/violin and flute/violin duets were provided by North Kingstown High School students Eli Hamblet, Gregory Nannig, Bethany Seavey, and East Greenwich resident Hollie Burchette. Wickford Middle School students Caitlin Alvarez, Katie Brunero, Mikayla Coble, Kelly Coleman, Megan Curran, Emma Haney, Laura Rogers, Lindsay Rudolph, and Amanda Whiteley sang carols under



Rebecca Long, Brielle Long, and James O'Donnell (l. to r.) sip cider by the fire and teach colonial games to kids of all ages at Christmas at the Castle. Photo by Bill Carey.

the direction of Naomi Schick. Joseph and Bonnie Smith and Sarah Ladd on classical guitar, harpsichord, and recorder respectively, lent a final touch of historic atmosphere.

Christmas at the Castle drew over 500 visitors, and the bake sales brought in nearly \$550. Thanks to all Castle volunteers who baked goodies and donated their time to make the event a success.

In conjunction with Christmas at the Castle, members of the *Connecticensis Puritanus* reenactment unit, represented

by Captayne Todd Gerlander, Ensigne Randal Gerlander and Corporal Lee Gerlander, laid a wreath at the graves of the soldiers who died during the Great Swamp Fight in December 1675.

On December 10, members of the Association and their guests continued the holiday celebration with the annual Christmas party. Attendees enjoyed a delicious spread of food and reflected on the progress achieved at the Castle over the previous year. Nearly 80 members and guests attended this annual event. ■

Officers and Trustees Elected, Budget Approved

Annual Meeting, February 6, drew a good crowd to receive committee reports, hear upbeat financial news for FY99, approve the new budget, and elect officers. New officers are Dick Bowen, President; Al Fenik, Vice President; Mary Shillaber, Treasurer; and Betty Fenik, Secretary. Trustee newcomers are Nancy Birch, David Callaghan, and Cathy Shippee. See the page-two side-bar for a full Trustee roster. The 1999 financial report and proposed 2000 budget are available in the office. ■

Did You Catch the Show?

We hope you saw the HGTV *Restore America* program featuring the Castle. A *Providence Journal* reporter alerted us the date had been changed again—back to February 13, but we couldn't get the word out to members in time. Producer Nancy Rubin Stuart extends apologies for the confusion. ■



Call Today— Get on the Spring Clean-up Team!

Ice and cold got you down? Think spring and be at the Castle on Saturday, April 1 or Sunday, April 2. Bring your elbow grease to help get the Castle ready for the new season. If each one gives just a little time, we'll be in smart shape for the first tour. It's a good chance to get acquainted too!

Call 294-3521 to sign up for a 2-hour shift. We'll work from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days—indoors and outdoors—from washing windows to whacking weeds. Choose what you'd like to do. Beverages and hot soup are on the house. Let's aim for the best turnout ever!

Note from the President

First of all, thanks to all the volunteers who helped make 1999 the wonderful year it was! We look forward to another great year ahead of strong teamwork at the Castle.

It's almost March! Before you know it the Castle will be open for another busy year of events and tours. This will require lots of preparation of the house and grounds.

We've planned a program that will allow many of you to participate in keeping up our appearance for the many visitors we will attract. Tasks are outlined and structured in sizes that will fit everyone's availability. Many hands can make for light work, and sharing these times will allow you to enjoy each other and our beautiful setting by the cove. Join the team!

Please mark your calendar for April 1 and 2 when Spring Cleanup is scheduled. Any thoughts or questions? Call the office at 294-3521. We'll see you at the Castle!

—Dick Bowen

The View from the Annex Window

As I look out today, the Castle is set in satiny white. The trees glisten and crackle as their icy skin bends in the cold wind's breath. The birds scap and scrabble for each bite. The cove is a shimmering sheet. The brook ice heaves and mends with the tide. Is this landscape stark and cold—or rather—a stunning expression of strength and survival? Bill and I now have seen all the seasons here. We continue to say, "This is beautiful."

Bill and I thank you very much for the holiday gift certificates. We're still contemplating how to spend this kind gesture of appreciation from the Castle membership.

We're gearing up for a busy spring. People are hard at work in Docent training, education, and May Is Museum Month planning. *Chronicle* production, etc. More volunteers are always needed. If you're not involved, come on board! Call 294-3521 to join an enthusiastic volunteer crew.

—Barbara Carey

- President
Richard M. Bowen, Jr.
- Vice President
Alex Fenik
- Treasurer
Mary Shillaber
- Secretary
Betty Fenik
- Past President
Bette Lou Pease
- Board of Trustees
Nancy Birch
Jan Breault
David Callaghan
Doris Dion
Louise Duckworth
Linda Eppich
William Ferrante
Joyce Fuller
Pat Labrie
Urban Nannig
James Peters
Cathy I. Shippee
Alfred D. Steinman
James C. Sullivan
Mary Turkel
Albert R. Vanderbilt
Lee Williams
Richard Z.
Zimmermann, Jr.
- Resident Manager
Barbara Carey
- Managing Editor
Urban (Bud) Nannig
- Editors
Barbara Carey
Bill Carey
Neil Dunay
- Production Assistant
Roberta Hale
- Graphic Design
Darrell McIntire

Procrastination Is Out— Volunteer Hours Are In!

Oh where, oh where are your volunteer hours? You might be putting off submitting your hours because you didn't keep track of the valuable time you spent working for Smith's Castle in 1999. Or maybe you think you don't have significant hours to report. Every single hour counts when we are asked about our volunteer support.

Here's a deal you can't refuse. We'll make it painless. If you didn't keep records, make a good estimate, call the office 294-3521, and give us that estimated grand total. We'll do the paperwork for you. It will be a guilt-free, feel-good phone call—satisfaction guaranteed! If you did keep track, call in your hours or just pop them into an envelope addressed to Smith's Castle, 55 Richard Smith Drive, Wickford, RI 02852. Next issue we hope our Volunteer Hours Report will include YOUR TIME. ■

Welcome New life Members

(As of January 27, 2000)

These members join a very special group giving exemplary support to Smith's Castle. Thank you.

Dick and Anne Bowen
Helen and Henry Spencer, II

Welcome to New Non-Business Members

(As of January 27, 2000)

Ruthann and Steven Baker
Joan Santos-Beaven
Deborah Britton
Janice Brown
Patricia DiBella
Trish Harmon
Lee and Bob Karwoski
Elinore MacDonald Kelly
Skip Kingsley
Mrs. Frank Lynch
Paul and Sue Nannig
Charlie and Sandy Petrarca
Steve and Mary Prashaw
Dorothy Scholl
Seavey Family
Linda Shortman
Sharon Walworth

Business Memberships Build

New business members Brown & Sharpe and Dalmyra Kennel have added two more blocks to our strengthening foundation of community partnerships. We extend a grateful welcome to both of these new members. Growth in our Business Membership Program is enhanced by your referrals. If you know of a business that might be interested in joining, please call the office, 294-3521, for details. ■

Results of 1999 Operations

As they say, it was a very good year! Thanks to all of you who helped make 1999 healthy and happy for Smith's Castle. The Castle budget worked out nicely with anticipated income above what was expected for the year. Expenses held the line well. The following stats are as of December 31, 1999:

Membership Statistics

Non-business membership units: 293
(individual, family, patron,
sustaining and life members)

Business membership units: 7

Membership receipts to date: \$11,153.

Castle Visitors

Special events 2,342

Admissions including students 1,895

Grand total visitors 4,237

Fresh Paint Will Do It! Candace Bengston

I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Smith's Castle, to give our docents a big thank you for their time and talents in making our Gift Shop a success in 1999. As we look forward to our opening season in May, I believe we will be inspired with new ideas, renewed enthusiasm, and a little fresh paint. ■



Library Inventory Continues

The library at Smith's Castle is being recatalogued to inventory the collection and to make it more accessible to members.

Volunteers from Bryant College began the process in August 1999, and Castle members, Neil Dunay and Darrell McIntire, continued the work in mid-January. Books on the shelves were recircled with handwritten cards in the current catalogue. Books without cards were set aside to be added to the catalogue. All books will then be recatalogued and entered into a database so the collection can be easily sorted or searched.

A number of books are currently on loan to Smith's Castle members. If any member has borrowed a book, please inform Neil Dunay at 294-7461 of its author, title, and catalog number. ■

Castle Hosts December Chamber Gathering

More than 60 local business representatives spent a cozy evening at Smith's Castle for the North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours on December 7, 1999. The house was abuzz with Chamber members enjoying the beautifully decorated historic atmosphere.

Karla Driscoll, Chamber Executive Director, called the event "A great opportunity for our members to enjoy one of our national treasures—right here in North Kingstown. This was a great way to begin the holiday season."

And Rick Rheinberger, 1999 Chamber President and Sr. Vice President of Affiliated Insurance Managers in Cranston, had such a good time that he offered to co-sponsor the December 2000 Business After Hours. We plan to take him up on his offer! ■

May Is Museum Month

Here's our line-up of events to mark the Rhode Island emphasis, "May Is Museum Month." Look for a special mailing in April with more details. Consider getting involved to make these activities happen. Call 294-3521 to find out what you can do.

Friday, May 5 Member-Guest Opening Reception. View Smith's Castle in National Preservation Award video.

Saturday, May 6 Opening Day. The 2000 season officially begins.

Tuesday, May 9 6:30 p.m. "Giving for Good: Your Legacy . . . Your Community." Learn more about options in charitable giving. North Kingstown Free Library.

Saturday, May 20 12:30-4:00 p.m. Spring Days on the Plantation. A glimpse into daily life in the plantation era. Encounter people at work and at play both inside and outside the house. ■

Docents Train for the 2000 Season

Jan Breault

During the fall, several orientation meetings were held to encourage interest in the docent program at Smith's Castle, and we are happy to report that the response was strong enough to have scheduled a three-part training session for new volunteer docents. Training began on Saturday, January 29 at the North Kingstown Free Library.

The first session, "SAVING THE HOUSE," included a history of the Cocumscuscoc Association by Jan Breault and a slide presentation on the restoration of the house by Mary Turkel. Lee Williams identified the various uses of the property over 300-plus years.

On February 12, the second training at the Library, was "HISTORY OF THE HOUSE," with presentations by a panel including Marge Swift, Bette Lou Pease, Trish Lopez, Joyce Fuller, Elinor Dykstra, Louise Duckworth, Tim Cranston, and Jan Breault.

The last session, April 15, will be held at the Castle. "ARTIFACT IDENTIFICATION" will be given by Linda Eppich, Chief Curator at the Rhode Island Historical Society. This will conclude the nine hours of formal basic training.

There will also be a costume workshop and training will continue at monthly docents' meetings. We thank all the volunteers for their commitment of time and energy and look forward to working with the new volunteers in the activities of preservation and education at Smith's Castle.

Docents Reprise Former Tradition

Joyce Fuller

Our first Christmas at the Castle in many years was a wonderful success thanks to the efforts of the docents who decorated the Castle and staffed the two-day event. Bette Lou Pease was the driving force who planned and organized it. Bob Pease was a convincing, historically accurate, and very charming Father Christmas. Cay Mulcare, Shirley Burnham, and Marge Swift conducted a very profitable bake sale which earned a tidy sum and sold every crumb. The Gift Shop, under the able management of Candace Bengston, did very lively business.

After all is said and done Christmas at the Castle is a tradition which should continue and become even better. Everyone who worked on it should accept a hearty "Thank You!"

Junior Docents Report

The Junior Docents have resumed meeting after a holiday break. We are building a model village with houses and craft buildings to learn about land use and architecture in a typical colonial community. We're also planning to learn colonial dances to perform at Castle events and would love to work with a small chamber music group. If anyone is interested in forming or joining such a group, please call the Castle, 294-3521.

The Saga of the “Don Bousquet Colonial”

My Summer of '72 at the Castle

I was an undergraduate anthropology major at URI during the summer of 1972. I performed archeological field work at Smith's Castle. My professor took a dim view of the fact that I owned an electronic metal detector. He derisively referred to me as a “pot hunter.” A proper archeological dig is conducted using small trowels, toothbrushes, even dental instruments. I was convinced that my metal detector could be of great use to our dig at Smith's Castle. The professor didn't agree. However, he finally relented and allowed me to search the ground in front of the Castle in an attempt to find any metal artifacts. Almost immediately, the instrument indicated something metallic at a depth of about six inches. I carefully scraped away the layers of soil and found a coin! Then I made my big mistake. I exclaimed rather loudly to my fellow students and the professor that I had found a coin. They all came running and were properly impressed with this New England coin dated, as I recall, 1654. The professor immediately relieved me of my treasure. I was disappointed, to say the least. I remember thinking that the coin could have been dropped by Roger Williams himself! And it could have been mine, all mine, if I hadn't said “Holy___, look at what I found!” See, I wanted to show that archeology professor that my metal detector was useful, and I wasn't just a pot hunter. Aw, what the heck, I'm glad Smith's Castle has the coin today.

DON BOUSQUET



1972 Dig Also Yields Musket Flint

Don Bousquet's story describes an “archeological testing program” that John A. Senulis directed at the encouragement of Dr. William Metz, URI history professor and former Cocumscussoc Association president. The dig occurred in August 1972, and Mr. Senulis published the findings in a January 1973, URI paper entitled “An Archeological Approach to Cocumscussoc.”

In the preface Prof. Senulis wrote, “Donald Bousquet did a preliminary survey with a metal detector.” No further mention of Mr. Bousquet or the controversial metal detector appears in the report.

The testing included six trenches. The trench where the silver coin was found yielded several other artifacts. Most notable was a brown musket flint similar to those made in France in the seventeenth century. Various fragments of ceramics were also discovered, including Westwald stoneware, colonial redware, yellow glazed ware (17th century), German salt-glazed stoneware (18th century), English delft, creamware, and pipe fragments.

Another trench yielded aboriginal artifacts, including quartzite flakes and a one-inch, grey-flint, stemless projectile point.

Prof. Senulis concluded that further excavations should be conducted at Cocumscussoc to shed insight into interior trade patterns from major routes to secondary centers, such as Cocumscussoc.

Brown University, under the direction of Patricia Rubertone, also did significant archeological work at the Castle in 1989, 1990, and 1991. ■



Making Sense of the Sixpence

The coin that Don Bousquet found remains in the Castle's collection and is believed to be a silver willow-tree coin. Willow-tree coins bear the date “1652” and a Roman numeral (in this case, “VI”) to designate the denomination (a sixpence). Around the rim appears “NEW ENGLAND” and an abbreviation for *Anno Domini*. On the obverse is a willow, surrounded by the words “MASATHUSETS IN.”

The coin is one in a series of three “tree” coins. All bear the date 1652, but none were actually produced in that year. The tree coins were made to replace a simple coin minted in 1652 that carried only the denomination on one side and the letters “NE” on the obverse. The simplicity of the design made the 1652 coins easy to counterfeit. In the same year, England forbade the colonists to mint their own coins. To solve the counterfeiting problem and circumvent the new order from England, the colonists issued a coin with a more complicated design but retained the 1652 date to make it appear that no coins were minted after 1652.

The willow tree was minted from 1653 to 1660, an oak tree appeared from 1660 to 1667, and a pine tree was circulated from 1667 to 1682.

For more information about colonial coins, see R.S. Yeoman's *A Guide Book of United States Coins* (various printings) or Norman M. Davis' *The Complete Book of United States Coin Collecting* (New York: MacMillan, 1976). Both are available at the North Kingstown Free Library. ■

Executive Committee Has Full Agenda

Much important business has kept the Executive Committee at work over the last months. With the blessing of the Committee, New England Glass & Mirror, a Connecticut company, has taken measurements and begun the job of custom building storm windows for the Castle. These windows will conserve heat and preserve the window sash. This storm window project is funded through a generous grant from the Champlin Foundations.

A revised Rental Agreement was approved that provides additional security for the Castle property as well as for those who rent the Castle grounds for private functions. (The Castle grounds are perfect for all kinds of special occasions, such as weddings, graduation parties, and reunions. Rental referrals are welcomed.)

In order to better accommodate visitors and protect the septic system as well, the installation of a season-long Port-a-John rental from Westerly Sanitation has also been recommended.

The Port-a-John proposal and the new Rental Agreement are to be presented to the full Board of Trustees for final approval at its February 16 meeting.

Note: The Executive Committee consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Immediate Past President, and three other Trustees appointed by the President. This committee meets as needed at the discretion of the President. ■

George S. Champlin Named Philanthropist of the Century

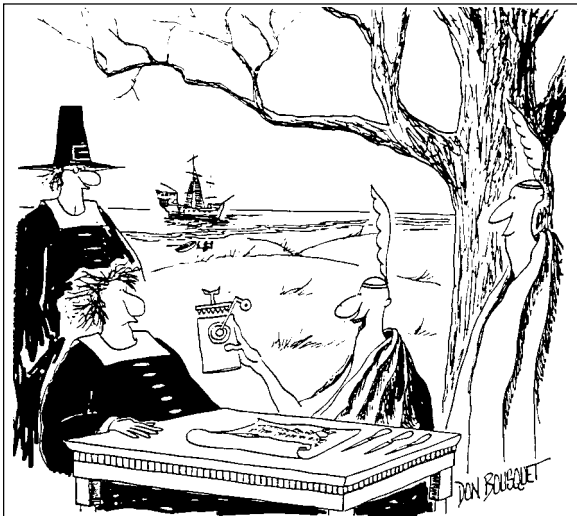
On November 16, 1999, National Philanthropy Day, George S. Champlin was named Rhode Island Philanthropist of the Century by the National Society of Fund Raising Executives—RI Chapter. This honor notes significant achievements in the long-standing tradition of public service held by this outstanding Rhode Island family. Hardly a week goes by without our hearing of yet another gift of support to education, libraries, land conservation, social services, youth and fitness, health care, culture and the arts.

Within this extensive range of philanthropy, their passionate interest in historic preservation has helped save and sustain countless Rhode Island treasures. The National Trust for Historic Preservation honored the Champlin Foundations in 1998 for its part in saving Smith's Castle. Cited as "the jewel in the crown" of Champlin historic preservation efforts, the Castle is featured in a commemorative publication produced by the Providence Public Library.

The story begins in 1838 when young Stanton Browning Champlin ran away from his South Kingstown farm and was given shelter by a kind merchant. This runaway went on to establish S.B. Champlin Jewelry Manufacturer in 1872.

In 1932, Stanton's grandchildren started the first foundation, its initial act of charity being the provision of food for the needy. After the establishment of a second foundation by grandchildren in 1947, George S. Champlin alone created the largest of the foundations in 1975. David A. King, the Foundations Executive Director, refers to George S. as "the Boss, who preferred to give his gifts anonymously as holiday surprises."

From humble runaway beginnings this family launched what has become about \$500 million in Champlin Foundations assets in 1999 and is the 98th largest philanthropic group in the country. ■



"HOW MUCH WOULD YOU EXPECT TO PAY FOR RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS...? WAIT, DON'T ANSWER, BECAUSE WE'LL ALSO INCLUDE THIS MIRACLE MAIZE PROCESSOR AND THREE PIECE SET OF DELUXE STEAK KNIVES... NOW HOW MUCH WOULD YOU PAY?"

© Don Bousquet

Give to Your Community and Take Care of Yourself as Well

On Tuesday, May 9, at 6:30 p.m., Smith's Castle, Gilbert Stuart Museum, Casey Farm, Watson Farm, South County Museum, and the *Brandaris* are co-hosting a charitable giving presentation by the Rhode Island Foundation. Deborah DiNardo and Susan Barry, foundation development officers, are leading the seminar.

Imagine the opportunity to craft your legacy during your lifetime and to play an active role in giving, whether it's through annual gifts, a life income plan, or deferred gift plan. Learn about what is new in philanthropy and how philanthropy differs from simply giving to charity. Explore ways to be part of this fantastic venture of giving to the community you care about and taking care of yourself as well.

The program will be held in the meeting room of the North Kingstown Free Library, 100 Boone St. Call 294-3521 to RSVP. ■



Hearty Pats on the Back to...

Trish Lopez for preparing the latest *Docent Manual* revision—a wonderful product! Thanks to Betty Follansbee, Linda Eppich, Diane Long, and Louise Duckworth for editing.

Roberta Hale for bringing us online with a powerful new Access membership data base.

Bette Lou and Bob Pease, Nancy Birch, Louise Heard, Betty Sue Reed, Jan Breault, Cay Mulcare, Shirley Burnham, Marge Swift, Joyce Fuller, Candace Bengston, Diane Long, Sandra Bernier, and

the Junior Docents for Christmas at the Castle leadership.

Cathy Shippee and Anne Bowen for the festive Member-Guest Christmas Party.

Mary Revello, Sandra Bernier, and Jane Crum for handling the Chamber Business After Hours refreshments, and Louise Duckworth, Joyce Fuller, and Lee Williams, Docents for the evening.

Dot Dion and Frankie Nannig for delicious Annual Meeting refreshments.

We try not to leave anyone out, but please forgive us if we have. ■

Opportunities!

Did your New Year's resolution include getting involved at Smith's Castle? We hope it did! Please call 294-3521 to find out more about these important jobs.

- Gift Shop sales
- Admissions volunteers
- Data entry
- General clerical
- Prepare bulk mailings
- Keep a scrapbook
- Carpentry
- Sewing—help make costumes and repair textiles
- Repair and maintain Castle boat
- Painting
- Committees—Special Events, Membership, Fund Raising, Grant Writing, Publicity/Marketing, Historical Research, Grounds Maintenance, Education

Thank You Community Volunteers

Once again community members have lent a helping hand. A big thanks to: Tina Crofton for office work; Carl Winsor for fence repair and general

clean up; and Ken Boudreau for front lawn work and mailing preparation. Advance thanks to Ken for goose fence repair when warm weather returns. ■

Our Condolences

The *Chronicle* staff has been notified of deaths of two of our members, John Morris of Wickford and John Prokopowicz of Cranston. On behalf of the membership, we extend sincere sympathy to these families.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

The Cocumscussoc Association
55 Richard Smith Drive
Wickford, RI 02852-4414

Nonprofit org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
N. Kingstown, RI
Permit No. 56