

The Castle Chronicle

Vol. 1 Issue 2

Letter from the President By Denise Boule



Inside this issue:

President's Letter	1
Student's Visit	1
Youth Education	2
Rainy-day games	2
Baseball at Cocumscussoc	3
Upcoming events	4
Round & About the Castle	4

It's that time of year again when we are in full swing at the Castle. The view is glorious with warm breezes, sunny blue skies, and the beautiful grounds of Smith's Castle. We are fortunate to have a 338 year old structure that the public can tour. We have spectacular gardens that have been developed and nurtured by the Master Gardeners from U.R.I., We continue to work on opening walking trails to Meadow Brook, the ice-house foundation, and the natural spring.

We also continue to work to preserve the Castle and its rightful place in North Kingstown history. Thanks to grants from the Champlain Foundation and Rhode Island State Preservation Fund we began and completed a new roof on the Castle. We are in the next phases of the project that will include carpentry, repainting, and a new main door. This phase of the project will be completed in the early fall of 2017.

While we continue to look for grant opportunities for specific needs, our day-to-day operations which include, but are not limited to landscaping, regular upkeep of plumbing, electrical work, cleaning, and preserving our archive collection are funded solely by income from tours and donations. With the exception of a part-time office manager, Smith's Castle is run by a dedicated group of volunteers.

In the coming year, we are looking to start a Capital Campaign, but need help to do so. If you would like to volunteer for this effort, please contact the office. We have an amazing piece of history in our midst. Thank you for your continued support, and we hope to see you at one of our upcoming events at the Castle.

Local Colleges Visit Smith's Castle

This spring, Rhode Island colleges took the opportunity to bring their students to Smith's Castle.

Professor Patricia Rubertone, who has led studies of the Castle grounds over the years, brought her students in the Material Culture Symposium to tour the Castle and grounds.

A few days later, professor Jon Marcoux of Salve Regina College brought a group of archeological students for a visit, fresh from a dig around Boston Neck.

Marcoux plans to submit a proposal to scan the grounds of the Castle in a forensic study, so to speak of what the grounds might have held in the past.





Three Sisters Growing under Master Gardners' Care

The University of Rhode Island's Master Gardener program has been maintaining a colonial era garden at Smith's Castle since 1960.

If you haven't yet noticed the new garden on the grounds, look for the "Three Sisters" garden planted this spring by the Master Gardeners of U.R.I.

A traditional Native American garden, the three sisters include Corn, beans, and Squash planted together.

While our garden is less traditional than the Native method of planting, we will use it to educate school children and adult visitors alike.



Youth Education a Year-Round Effort

by Maggie Skenyon

We hit the ground running this spring with many tours booked for schools who wanted to provide a hands-on component to their lessons on Rhode Island's colonial history.

Our all-volunteer force came through to assist with these visits to the Castle, some of which involved up to fifty children.

Thank you to Bob Geake, Louise Duckworth, Rob Rouse, Marion Adams, Marilyn Harris, Joyce Fuller, Cathe Rezendes, Casey Bluel, Emma Anderson, Sharon Ferrara, Angie Stone, Maureen Blazejewski, and Gen Meegan for their hard work in making these programs of such a high caliber that we have teachers who return yearly.

The more sophisticated our technology becomes, the more amazed children are regarding the

length of time that was required to perform necessary tasks such as food preparation, letter writing as the only source of communication, and the making of clothing. Remembering the past helps us appreciate the present!

We are constantly reviewing our hands-on activities so that we provide crafts that demonstrate colonial lifestyle in its truest form.

Stay tuned for a lesson on natural dyeing that will become an additional option as an educational activity.

How to Play Hub Bub

So the forecast is calling for a rainy, rainy day, and you had hoped to get the kids to the beach. This calls for a "Plan B" inside activity. Play some rounds of Hub Bub, a Native American game in which points are accumulated based upon a combination of symbols that come up when marked sticks or smooth stones made into dice are tossed. Any age from pre-K to adult can participate, and you need someone who will keep score. There are several variations, but here is a basic version that won't take a long time to get a winner.

To keep it simple, use 3 popsicle sticks. Draw a snake along ONLY ONE of the flat sides of 2 of the sticks. Draw a star on ONLY ONE of the flat sides on the other stick. Be creative as you like in drawing these symbols. I found that Sharpie markers work best on wood.

Each player tosses the three sticks into the air. Points are as follows:

All plain sides: 4 points, All marked sides: 4 points, Two symbols and one plain: 6 points, Two plain and one symbol: 6 points, One plain, One snake, one star: 0 points. Winners are the first team to reach 21 points.



Baseball at Cocumscussoc

by Bob Geake

Baseball, that great American pastime had its beginnings after the Civil War, when it began to grow in popularity. The community of South County played a role in the development of the sport, both locally, and in promoting the sport on a national level.

In his 1949 book "Lafayette, Rhode Island", George W. Gardiner writes that

"Lafayette had its baseball teams from a time soon after the Civil War...the "diamond" was located at different places in the village. One site was the Thomas lot, near the present sand and gravel pit. Another was at Wedgewood Park, so-called, on the Old Baptist Road, a short way from Huling's Corners. While playing on the latter field, the Lafayette nine was named "The Moguls", and the title stuck for a long time. Another field was on the former site of the East Lafayette schoolhouse. Later, the team used as a baseball field the lot on the Cocumscussoc Farm, now part of the site of the Wickford Housing Development".

Neighbor and diarist Harriet "Aunt Hat" Smith, recalled in June of 1884 that "A number of years ago, a portion of the southern extremity of Updike-Congdon farm was devoted to exercising trotting horses, and more recently baseball players exercise there. I saw a large number of them there this PM, I've seen playing, this hot day too. Well they, some of them, can play easier than they can work in the heat, I presume.

Most recently, North Kingstown historian Tim Cranston has written of the heyday of America's pastime at Wickford, and the field of Cocumscussoc. In the year 1892, Cranston writes, "Folks in North Kingstown thought that this was their year", the local team, stocked with some hearty veteran players, was ready to "enter the bigs, the State League, and compete with teams from Providence, Newport and beyond".

Austen Fox, the son-in-law of Mrs Babbit, and eventual owner of Smith's Castle was a devoted baseball fan, and oversaw construction of a diamond and grandstands in a pasture at the corner of West Main street at what is now Wilson Park to be used as the home field. More than one hundred players vied for openings on the team that year. When the roster was selected, town officials voted to donate money for uniforms and equipment, and the "Wickford" began their season. It was a triumphant run, with the home team playing Newport in the final game for the State Championship. Though they lost 2-0, the

Sign Up for Baseball at Cocumscussoc Ages 6-12

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

T-Shirt size _____

Two games will be played for age groups 6-9, and 10-12 for 5 innings each. Teams will be limited to 12 players each, Each player will get a replica t-shirt and cap for their participation.

Round and About Smith's Castle

Lecture on the Lawn:

Monday, August 14th 6:00 pm

Bob Geake discusses "A Cocumscussoc Reader"

Monday September 11th 6:00 pm

Norman Desmarias talks about the Revolutionary defenses on the coast of Rhode Island

Golf Tournament

Friday September 22nd 8:30 am

Laurel Lanes Country Club

Harvest Festival

Saturday, September 30th 12-4:00 pm

Pot-Luck Supper

Thursday October 12th 6:00 pm



At right are photos of recent events: top, Heritage Days, last May, Ranger John McNiff spoke to trustees and docents at July's pot-luck supper, and the Master Gardner's continue to nurture our colonial gardens. Photos courtesy of Gail Burda, Chet Browning, and Bob Geake.

Annual Golf Outing-Save the Date By Bob Stone

The 7th Annual Golf Tournament will be held September 22nd at Laurel Lane Country Club, 309 Laurel Lane, West Kingston. This event raises funds for the operation of Smith's Castle and has become a very important source of funding.

Play will be a scramble format and the registration form is available on our web site, in our Annex office, or from Co-Chairs Bob Stone (401-258-1599) or Bob Verdi (401-294-8242).

Cost is \$115.00 and includes a full lunch. Non-members are welcome to play!

IF YOU ARE NOT A GOLFER

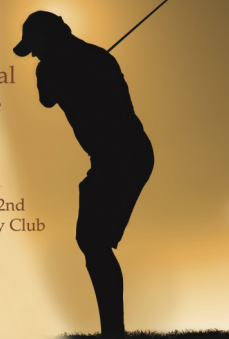
-but know someone who is, forward this information to them. It promises to be a fun day with golf at a great course, prizes, contests, raffles and more!

WANT TO HELP GET THE WORD OUT?

If you know a business or organization that would display a tournament poster or might possibly become a sponsor or donor, let us know. Posters are currently available in the Annex.

FORE

A GREAT CAUSE



The 7th Annual Smith's Castle Open Golf Tournament

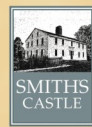
Friday, September 22nd
Laurel Lane Country Club
8:30 Scramble Start

Join us as we raise money to support Smith's Castle, North Kingstown's own National Historic Landmark.

Get your group together to enjoy a great day of golf, raffles, prizes and more to benefit a great cause. You can wear stripes, solids or plaids, but we would prefer checks. Help us make this a great day!

For more information please call:
Bob Verdi - 401.294.8242
Bob Stone - 401.258.1599

Visit
www.smithscastle.org
to download the registration form



55 Richard Smith Drive, Off Post Road, North Kingstown, RI www.smithscastle.org