



The Castle Chronicle

Vol.3 Issue 2

Letter from the President by Chet Browning

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Hello to all.

This summer has produced several weeks of extreme heat and humidity, at times with indexes over 100 degrees. I am proud to say that our incredible docents endured through it all. During the days of 100 plus degrees docents volunteered to remain on hand in their colonial outfits in anticipation of visitors, who did show up. They are the base on which our organization continues to succeed.

Fall has the Castle preparing for two main events: On September 28th we host a conference titled "Roger Was Here" which gathers a number of local scholars and historians to discuss Roger Williams, Rhode Island's founder and neighbor to Richard Smith.

On October 19th we will hold our annual Fall Festival called "Dairy Days" in honor of previous owner Austin Fox and his well know Cocumscussoc Dairy, House tours, music, and numerous vendors will hopefully get the community to come and join our celebration.

Sadly, I have to report that Office Manager/Bookkeeper Gail Burda has retired after eight and a half years with the Cocumscussoc Association. Her many years running our communications, scheduling tours, and later finance operations will make it difficult to find a person to fill her shoes. We hope Gail will now relax and enjoy some quiet time at home.

Festivals Galore!

This season's Strawberry Festival was a great success, with a record number of families attending the event this year. Chairperson Denise Boule, with co-chairs Mary Gardiner and Gen Meegan gave us a fun, family oriented day, with the popular pony rides, marionette Dan Butterworth, and chickens and rabbits from Casey Farm were all on hand for visitors.

The festival raised over \$6,000.00 for Smith's Castle. Thank you to all volunteers who contributed to making sure our guests had a great day at the Castle.

A festival of sorts, will celebrate the life of Roger Williams at Cocumscussoc when Smith's Castle will host "Roger Was Here", an all-day seminar on William's life and work on September 28th, with presenters G. Timothy Cranston, Charlotte Carrington-Farmer, Robert A. Geake, J. Stanley Lemons, John McNiff, Loren Spears, and James Warren. Guests will have a continental breakfast and lunch provided with their admission. The day will also feature a song from the Rocky Hill School Caretakers of History. If you would like to volunteer for this event, please speak with Bob Geake or email rgeake57@gmail.com

Harvest Festival is also on the horizon for October 19th, reprising the theme of "Dairy Days" to highlight the farm's early twentieth century Cocumscussoc Dairy, when it was the coveted site of the Ayershere Breeders conventions and the home of "Jean Star" a prize winning cow that produced the most milk of any other in New England. This too, will be a family event, Jesse Liam will perform, dancing from the Ladies of the Rolling Pin, and a pumpkin roll for prizes will all be part of the fun.

Paranormal Tours A Popular Way to Tour the Castle

Paranormal tours have increased in popularity. Be sure to register early for a visit,

As we have seen the past few seasons, the popularity of paranormal tours at the Castle remain a popular way to spend a Friday or Saturday evening. Provided by Rise-Up Paranormal, the organization which has provided these services to many of the state's historic homes owned and operated by preservation societies. The tours provide some history of the Castle and its three centuries of inhabitants, and then provide visitors with equipment to help them detect and communicate with spirits in the house.

Camera's and EVP recorders have captured some intriguing moments and voices in the Castle bedrooms, dining room, kitchen,, and law office of the house. Some of these are available online at <http://riseupparanormal.com> or on YouTube.

There are still a few tours coming up this season, you may call 401-294-3521

Events and Educational Programs Highlight Successful Season

Both annual events and educational programs at the Castle have had a highly successful season.

With our opening weekend being an open house, many came from the community and other parts of the state to take a tour of the house and help us celebrate out 70th season at Cocumscussoc.

Educational programs such as our "Lecture on the Lawn" series which featured historians Linford Fisher, Rob Grandchamp, and Bob Geake were well attended, and our new programs of Sunday "Tea with a Dash of History" proved to be very popular this season.

This year's Strawberry Festival garnered the largest crowd and profits of any event of the past few years, and as we wind down the season, expectations are high for our annual Harvest Festival, our seminar "Roger Was Here", and Christmas at the Castle to close the season. We expect to also sponsor two or three off-season events in partnership with the North Kingstown Public Library. Look on our website and Facebook pages for further details.

Master Gardeners Expand Education at the Castle



University of Rhode Island's Master Gardeners expanded both gardens and educational programming at the Castle this season. Beginning with a class on Colonial Gardening in June, and presenting a history of the colonial garden and a tour as part of our "Tea and History" series in July, the master gardeners provided opportunities for the community to learn about their work at Smith's Castle and other historic sites.

The gardens that these dedicated volunteers provide to the grounds are an ongoing benefit to visitors to Smith's Castle, and an educational addition to the history learned about Cocumscussoc.

As part of the URI Master Gardener's mission is to educate the public on healthy and safe gardening practices, as well as promoting home gardening throughout the state.; Smith's Castle is a perfect venue to offer these programs. We look forward to more programs next season.



Castle Receives Second Award from Society for Colonial Wars

Smith's Castle received a second award this year from the national branch of the Society for Colonial Wars. The nearly \$1663.19 prize was awarded after Society members gathered at Smith's Castle in July, to commemorate the memorials the society placed on the grounds. After that visit and the award of \$2000.00, the Society placed the Cocumscussoc Association in the running for a national award. We thank the members of the Society for Colonial Wars for their continued support of Smith's Castle.



Seminar on Roger Williams Slated for Sept. 28th

The long planned seminar on Roger Williams and his life and work at Cocumscussoc has finally reached fruition. Thanks to a generous donation from a friend of Smith's Castle, the seminar will now take place on Saturday, September 28, 2019.

The day will begin with a continental breakfast at 8:30 to allow participants to sign in and register. President Chet Browning will welcome the visitors and Loren Spears will lead a blessing over the day's activities. Scheduled presenters will include North Kingstown historian Tim Cranston, Professor Charlotte Carrington-Farmer from Roger Williams University, Rhode Island historian Bob Geake, Professor Emeritus of Rhode Island College, Dr. J. Stanley Lemons, Ranger John McNiff from the Roger Williams Memorial Park, Dr. Loren Spears, Director of the Tomaquag Museum, and Independent scholar James Warren. In addition, the "caretakers of history" from the Rocky Hill School will perform a song entitled "Richard and Roger"

Admission is \$35.00 per adult, \$10 for members, students, and seniors over 65.

Lunch will be provided for participants, and tours of the house and grounds will be provided during that hour.

Books from presenters will be available at the seminar courtesy of Wakefield Books.



Members Pot-Luck Supper

Thursday, September 10th 6:00 p.m.

Bring your own dish and catch up with friends. Our guest will be Ashley Simford of the Rhode Island Archives.

Tea & A Dash of History

Sunday, September 15th 4:00 p.m.

Hosted by Mary Katherine Goddard (1738-1816) as interpreted by Marilyn Harris

Who will share stories of her mother and her amazing family's contribution to the Revolutionary War.

Roger Was Here

Saturday, September 28th 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Harvest Festival: Dairy Days

Saturday October 19th 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Around and About Smith's Castle



The Old Time Fiddlers Club of Rhode Island returned to entertain guests at our opening weekend as well.

The RI Pirate Players educated visitors on life at sea in the 18th century during our Open House in May.



Visitors gather on the Annex lawn for children's colonial games and face painting during Strawberry Festival. The URI Master Gardener's "Three Sisters" garden is in the foreground.



Large crowds came throughout the day to our Strawberry Festival, making it one of our best attended events to date...

