

Castle Chronicle

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Strawberry Festival Adds Herb Day June 10

Strawberry Festival on Saturday, June 10, takes a new turn with Herb Day activities accompanying this traditional annual event. From noon to 4 pm, visitors can indulge in delicious homemade strawberry shortcake topped with sweet fresh cream and learn about the cultivation and uses of herbs.

Retailers Schartner Farms, Freeborn's Garden Center, Rose of Sharon, and Mama's Herbs are confirmed participants. They will bring plants and other herbal products available for purchase.

David Key, an herbalist, will take visitors on a walk to introduce them to wild edible plants found on the Castle grounds. Our own 18th century garden will be open with knowledgeable people available to answer questions.

Ongoing will be a wide variety of children's herbal craft activities, such as making sachets and tussie mussies, rubber stamping, and planting seeds. Old and young can make their own tea bags, and listen to stories told by Betty Follansbee.



The 18th century garden will be a focal point for Strawberry Festival/Herb Day activities.

Walk through the first floor of the house and listen to period music performed by the *Earl's Court Consort* in the Updike Dining Room. Costumed docents will answer questions about the house and its history.

Shirley Burnham and Eunice Pratt are managing the food service for the Strawberry Festival. Nancy Birch, with help

from Anne Bowen and Audrey Moncrieff, is making arrangements for the Herb Day activities. Mary Shillaber is coordinating the numerous overall logistical details.

Admission is \$4 for shortcake, beverage, and house walk or \$1 for the house walk only. Craft activities are optional for a small fee. Rain date is June 11.

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Springtime Blossomed with New Event—Spring Days on the Plantation

Spring Days on the Plantation was just around the corner as we went to press—a first time education event planned in conjunction with May is Museum Month. The goal of this May

20 event was to provide visitors an opportunity to step back into the mid 18th century to learn about typical activities in the daily life of a plantation. The Docents and other volunteers enthusi-

astically responded to serve in the many capacities outlined by co-coordinators Candace Bengtson and Cathe Rezendes. See the next issue for full coverage. ■

New Display Boards Take to the Walls

The "Walls Committee," Joyce Fuller, Trish Lopez, Betty Fenik, and Bette Lou Pease, in consultation with Lou Sansone, has won Trustee approval of new display units for the Castle. The boards will display Castle history information which visitors can review in the Meeting Room.

The plan is for four black panels to be installed around the room to support pictures, maps and documents which tell the Castle's story. The backs of the items

displayed will have Velcro adhesive so they may remain on permanent exhibit or be exchanged easily for other pieces. It will be possible to remove and transport the fabric-covered composition boards thus making them available for school tours and other events. All items to be displayed will be pre-approved by the Members of the Board. Monies donated in honor and in memory of Nate Fuller will finance this project. ■

Let Us Entertain You!

Smith's Castle is one of hundreds of listings in *Entertainment 2000*, *Great Times* and *Great Savings*. Coupons are available to all current members for fine and casual dining, museum admissions, car rentals, retail outlets, and much more in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. Stop by the Annex Office, browse through the book, and select a coupon. Coupons are valid through November, 2000. ■

Note from the President

Our storm windows are under construction and installation should be complete by the end of May.

By the time you read this edition of the *Chronicle*, a *port-a-john* will have been installed on the Castle grounds. Careful consideration was exercised to select a reasonably attractive solution to meet the needs of our visitors and rental guests. Site selection and appropriate planting will make the appearance of this unit compatible with its surroundings.

With the approval of the trustees, our three local libraries will be able to purchase family memberships. This will allow library patrons to visit the Castle by using the loan of the Membership Pass.

Stonehouse Productions has given us seven copies of *Roger Williams and Rhode Island*, a video that was filmed at our location. Trustees have approved a policy for their use. Inquire at the office if you are interested.

Darrell McIntire has designed new stationery for office use. The Trustees received it with great enthusiasm.

I hope you all will enjoy activities at Smith's Castle in the upcoming season. I consider our Members and Trustees as ambassadors to all who visit our grounds and observe our exhibits.

—Dick Bowen

The View from the Annex Window

There are many Castle volunteer opportunities, great and small, and—best of all, fine people to volunteer alongside of you! In this issue we've highlighted just two—grant seekers on p. 6 and membership committee members on p. 3. Please call 294-3521 to make a connection between YOUR interests and Castle needs.

Welcome new docent trainees! Thank you for the time already spent in training. As you shadow our experienced docents and begin to "learn the ropes," please know that you are making a vital contribution.

The phone "rang off the wall" with requests for school tours! Rhode Island children could not visit the Castle without our "school tour" docents and the serious work of the education committee chaired by Jan Breault. Our spring schedule is packed, making it clear that we need to bring even more new volunteer docents aboard. Please help spread the good word about our needs!

Look for our new hospitality flag flying out front, welcoming all visitors to the Castle. Thank you, Dick Bowen, not only for doing the legwork to find this new flag, but for being a flag bearer—leading and supporting all nature of Castle business.

—Barbara Carey

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Volunteers Clean-Up Buildings and Grounds

Saturday, April 1, forty or so volunteers worked at the Castle to prepare for our 2000 season. Audrey Moncrieff directed a group of Master Gardeners in weeding, pruning, and mulching the house and garden area. Some of the volunteers raked and bagged leaves from the lawn. Another crew worked along Post Road and the entrance to the Castle. The trees were trimmed, vines were cut back, and brush was brought under control.

Meanwhile...back at the Castle, windows were washed, bedding aired, cobwebs removed, and lunch prepared. The gift shop was restocked to be ready for customers.

Sunday, April 2, another dozen or so people worked to finish the garden and clear the area around the gravesite. The trucks went to and from Bob Reed's property where they were allowed to off-load the clippings. Our sympathy goes to all of the volunteers that ended the weekend with Poison Ivy!

Thank you! We would not have been ready for visitors on May 6 if it were not for your 300 hours of dedication. ■

—Jan Breault

Help Still Needed for Tending of Grounds

Your museum is looking for a few good men and women to help tend the grounds. Dick Bowen and Al Fenik have developed a plan where one individual will be responsible for light duty grounds maintenance each month. The heavy-duty jobs such as lawn mowing, snow plowing and window washing will be done by professionals. The jobs list varies from month to month but should take no more than 1–2 hours per week. Typical activities include picking-up the trash along Post Road, walking the property and dealing with obvious problems or calling someone to deal with them, placing snow stakes along the driveways, placing and removing Christmas decorations, and planning Spring and Fall cleanup days. We currently have six volunteers and need another six. Call Dick Breault at 294-2326 or E-mail me at rbrea32337@aol.com to volunteer. Hurry, the prime season is almost all booked! ■

—Dick Breault, Grounds Coordinator

Spicer Donates Lawn Mower

Bill Spicer of B & M Mower, 99 South Road in North Kingstown, has donated a gas powered push mower for use on the Castle grounds. This mower will be of great help in mowing areas not easily accessible with the lawn tractor. Thank you, Bill! ■

Docent Symposium in the Works

Docents and staff members from museums large and small throughout the state have been meeting to plan an all-day statewide docent symposium to be held September 18, 2000 at the Haffenreffer Museum. The search is on for a keynote speaker and the committee is planning sessions on topics that will be of greatest interest to both docents and management. Some topics that seem timely and relevant include: how museums are changing, museums and tourism, understanding typical learning styles so that museums can be more effective teachers, and the 3 Rs of docenting. Representatives from Smith's Castle are attending the planning sessions. ■

Junior Docents Report

Junior Docents spent their winter meetings building a miniature colonial village. It is displayed at the Castle and can be transported to schools. We began with buildings constructed by Louise Duckworth, and applied siding, shingles, doors, and windows. Jan Breault created a landscape cloth and storyboard to complete an intriguing, easily portable display.

For Strawberry Festival & Herb Day we are working on an interactive booth that will allow visitors to make their own tea bags with either flavored Oolong or herbal tea. We are researching the Boston Tea Party and hope to include that story in our display. ■

—Diane and Rebecca Long

Your Memberships Make It Happen—Won't You Renew Now?

School tours have significantly increased, volunteers are working hard, fresh ideas are flowing, and the facility needs faithful stewardship. We need your support to keep the momentum rolling. Send your membership today. Invite a friend to join too!

New Life Members

(As of May 2, 2000) These members join a very special group giving exemplary support to Smith's Castle. Thank you!!!

Sarah Updike Bull Lew Towler

Welcome New 2000 Non-Business Members

(As of May 2, 2000)
Kenneth and Beverly Boudreau
Jane Crum
William Gannon Family
Richard and Janet Jacques
George E. Lee
Nicholas Mangiardi, Jr.
Louise Richter
Elwyn Taylor
John Weaver and Beaven Linsley

Business Memberships Up

Low Towler Enterprises (now in Ann Arbor, MI) and **Natelli Systems, Inc.** are the newest additions to our Business Membership Program, joining a very special group of Smith's Castle members. If our readers know of other businesses that might be interested in this program, please call the office, 294-3521, for information. ■

Members Out & About

Kudos to **Dr. Roger Turkel, DDS**, Smith's Castle business member, for receiving a North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce 1999 Business Improvement Award for major new expansion of office facilities and services.

Good luck to **Dr. William Ferrante**, Castle trustee, in his new position at the New England School of Technology.

Congratulations and best wishes to members **Joan and Lou Sansone** who have retired from 20 years at their Frameworks business. Enjoy your cooking, cruising, and cultivating! ■

Membership Stats

These figures reflect year 2000 new and renewed members and include all memberships received on or after Plantation Days, 1999.

(As of May 2, 2000)

Non-business membership units: (individual, family, patron, sustaining and life members)	218
Business membership units:	10
Membership receipts to date:	\$7,830.

Budgeted income for 2000 is \$15,000, including business and non-business units.

New Membership Committee Takes Stage to increase numbers

It's a tough act to follow former "director" Lew Towler and his "cast of characters," but Trustee Jim Sullivan's new membership committee, is ready to "write the script" for membership 2000.

Committee goals this year will include devising plans for nonbusiness and business membership development by looking at strategic questions, such as:

- How does the Castle successfully interest, educate, involve, and retain its current members?
- In what ways can we reach out to potential new members?
- How do a web site, community advertising forums, members' personal contacts, Castle events, educational programs, and fund raising events impact membership development?

Sullivan hopes to increase the size of the committee by at least three members, so if the questions above sound like ones you'd like to help answer, please call the office, 294-3521. The current committee includes Trustees, David Callaghan and Cathy Shippee, and Resident Manager Barbara Carey. ■

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Here's the Good, the Bad, & YOUR Pledge for 2000

Here's an update on 1999 volunteer hours. The good news is a total of 1,520 hours have been reported. The bad news is that this total is only a fraction of Castle volunteer gifts of time.

Pledge TODAY to count your hours in 2000. PLEASE start counting now! ■

Do You Want to Dance?

Members have expressed interest in forming a research group to learn about early vocal and instrumental music and dance within the time frame of Castle history. Demonstration or performance at Castle events could be an offshoot of this group. Interested? Call the office, 294-3521. ■

Building 19 Foundation Lends Support

The Building 19 Foundation has generously given an unrestricted gift of \$250 to be used for the Castle mission of education and historic preservation.

Elaine Ellis, foundation chairperson, wrote, "Our board was very impressed with the work that you're doing . . . We sincerely hope that this gift makes a difference, and we wish you continued success in your endeavors." ■

18th Century Garden Displays Age-Old Favorite

This issue we feature a springtime favorite from the Castle garden, the bleeding heart, genus *Dicentra*. This beautiful perennial has handsome deeply-cut, leaves which make a perfect counterpoint for the rosy-crimson, heart-shaped flowers that dangle from tall arching stems, like rows of lockets on a necklace.

It's a perfect specimen for shady areas since it does best without direct sun, preferring soil rich in humus and ample moisture. Roots can be divided in spring or one can take early summer root cuttings. If propagated from seed, it should be sown into flats in midsummer. Different species range in height from 18 to 30 inches. The American native is not as showy as the cultivated variety.

The common name, bleeding heart, comes from a Chinese legend in which the blossoms are described as a heart with a drop of blood seeping forth. In 1846 the English botanist Robert Fortune returned from the Orient with the largest



single plant shipment ever arriving in England. It was made possible

by the development of a new type of terrarium allowing plants to survive for an extended period of time. Among the varieties was a single bleeding heart collected from the Grotto Gardens on the island of Chusan. It propagated easily and became particularly popular with English gardeners.

As American pioneers moved westward, they moved out of shipping range but still wanted their favorite plants on their new homesteads. To meet this need, along came the plant peddlers, traveling from one area to another selling seeds and plants. We know the most famous of these as Johnny Appleseed. Bleeding heart was always one of the top sellers. ■

Castle Gift Shop

pocket flasks ✦ Wedgewood pottery ✦ ink wells ✦ dominos
bird feeders ✦ musical yo yo's
train whistles ✦ blackboards
tin lanterns ✦ hooks ✦ salad
paddles ✦ baskets ✦ marbles
whirligigs ✦ powder horns
wooden boxes ✦ rock candy
cookbooks ✦ picture frames
pillows ✦ aprons ✦ bonnets
sachets ✦ bookmarks ✦ cards
Gibralters ✦ candle holders
balsam cats ✦ stars ✦ socks
games ✦ needlework ✦ hats
soap ✦ quill pens ✦ tinware
spinners ✦ mugs ✦ ornaments
needlework ✦ dried flowers

**Open during Castle
hours of operation**

Sources: *An Alphabet of Garden Flowers* by Marie Angel and *Garden Flower Folklore* by Laura C. Martin

Artifact Highlight:

Updikes Import French Wash Stand

One of the few furnishings at Smith's Castle that once belonged to the Updike family is a wash stand that is currently displayed in the southwest corner of the Updike bedroom.

Measuring 52 inches tall, the stand has delicately curved legs, a curved-top tilting mirror, turned arms to hold candles, and molded areas for milk-glass washing accessories. The glassware includes a large wash bowl, a smaller bowl, a jar, a soap-dish with lid, and a long narrow tray.

The wash stand belonged to Anstis Updike, the daughter of Lodowick and Abigail Updike. Norman Smith donated this artifact to the Castle in 1957.

A handwritten note on the back of the mirror describes the stand's history: "This cocoa of olive wood French dressing stand brought from Parris [sic] In 1792, by Capt. Lewis Basworth, Prov., R.I. owner of Sloop Union captured by the French Schooner Alliance, May 13th, AD 1799"

While this precise history is not confirmed, the piece represents the neoclassical style that was prevalent from c1790–1800.

The Association's Furnishings Committee continues to look for other artifacts associated with the Castle's history and its owners. If you have any pieces that fit this description or know the whereabouts of such pieces, please contact the Castle. ■

—Neil Dunay



Anstis Updike's French dressing stand was brought from Paris in 1792.►

House Committee Keeps Castle Up to Stuff

A bid is in to touch-up paint the Castle. Mary Turkel recommends Jeffrey Balch, Inc., who has experience in painting such historic buildings as Slater Mill and Nathaniel Greene Homestead. The job is expected to take one week to complete.

Plans are also underway to make electrical circuitry and lighting available for outdoor events for member activities and rental guests.

Despite preventive measures, a pipe froze in an interior wall over the winter. It was necessary to cut through the Meeting Room wall to diagnose and repair the problem. A wood panel conceals the opening until we are sure that this will not reoccur when the system is drained again next winter.

It has been confirmed with Jack Renshaw, our Restoration Project architect, that no more than ten people should be in the 18th Century Bedroom (above the Richard Smith Room) at any given time. Members and visitors will be guided to respect this load limit. Heavy traffic in that room can cause movement in the structure resulting in irreparable damage to the 17th century framing. ■

Education Committee Sees Results and Moves Ahead

The Education Committee has met twice this spring to finalize plans for the programs for the 2000 season. We have been pleased with the Docent Training that concluded on April 15. Each new volunteer has been offered 12 hours of Castle history and clothing construction. The committee has also taken responsibility for the members' reception to open the season on May 5.

Spring Life on the Plantation was a dream last October, but became a reality on May 20 thanks to the Event Coordinators, Cathy Rezendes and Candace Bengtson. This is an education program offered to the public at the regular admission rate.

Watch for news on a new adult education program for fall 2000. The Education Committee is also working on programs for the 2001 season. We would like to introduce some new methods of reaching our public. We also developed a WISH LIST of wants and needs to direct the committee in the next year. Anyone wishing to join this committee should contact Barbara Carey at 294-3521. ■

—Jan Breault

Furnishings Committee Schedules Activities

The Committee participated in the housecleaning session on April 1, 2000, and objects were dusted and some of the textiles were vacuumed. The curtains for the 17th century bedchamber were washed and ironed; they are thin and quite worn and will need to be replaced next year. The drop (or dust ruffle) on the 18th century bed was repaired.

Future plans include removal of fragile textile and costume items stored in drawers of chests to acid-free boxes (May 2000), building of shelves in the closet in the 18th century bedchamber (Summer 2000), and cataloging and filing of photographs (May 2000). Intern Laura Anderson continues to assist the committee. ■

—Linda Eppich, Chair

Hearty Pats on the Back to...

Dick and Jan Breault for the *Excel* database of Rhode Island schools. What a help!

Jan Breault, Bette Lou Pease, and Cay Mulcare for "feeding and watering" all the hard workers on Spring Clean-Up Weekend! **Dick Breault, Al Fenik, and Dick Bowen** for coordinating the jobs to be done.

Joyce Fuller for leadership of the Walls Committee. The handsome new display boards are in place (See story on p. 1)

John Eppich and **John Chase** for repair of Castle artifacts. Your work helps us "keep up our appearances."

Audrey Moncrieff and Master Gardener classes of 1999 and 2000—25 volunteers strong—we couldn't have done it without you!

Jan Breault, Diane Long, and Louise Duckworth for behind the scenes work on the new colonial village display.

Mary Turkel, Lee Williams, Joyce Fuller, Tim Cranston, Louise Duckworth, Jan Breault, Bette Lou Pease, Elinor Dykstra, Marge Swift, Elinor Kelly, and Linda Eppich for presentations during the recently completed Docent training. Great work!

Candace Bengtson for readying our Gift Shop with lots of interesting new merchandise! Look for some adorable handmade kitties!

Damon Rivard and Dick Bowen for securing the donation of the new lawnmower from **Bill Spicer** at B & M Mower.

Mary Turkel for professional expertise in "showing off the Castle" to reps of the Vernacular Architecture Forum, in RI to plan site visits for their 2001 conference. We hear they were impressed!

Jan Breault and Bob Shillaber for planning the May 5 Member Reception and to all the Docents who baked cookies.

Opportunities!

Volunteer Grant Seeker Committee Member Needed to—

- receive board requests to fund exciting new Castle projects
- research foundations and corporations
- identify potential funding sources that match Castle projects
- gather supportive data for proposals
- write and edit proposals

If you have skills in these areas, please call the office, 294-3521. This summer we hope to form a coordinating committee interested in securing funding that can take us to a new level of excellence!

Our Sympathy

The *Chronicle* staff has been notified of the death of **Kenneth A. Payne** of Wickford. On behalf of the membership, we extend sincere sympathy to the Payne family.

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