

Castle Chronicle



Volume 13 Number 4 ■ Winter 2004

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

New Resident Director Has History in Her Blood

Darlene Trew Crist

 In a bright, warm, nearly perfect Saturday afternoon in early October, I had the opportunity to sit on the steps of the Annex and chat with Kari Van Buren, who had been in her job as Smith's Castle's resident director for exactly one week. The following is a summary of our conversation about Kari's background, her vision for Smith's Castle, and what she sees as the opportunities and challenges in her new position:

So, you're not any relation to Martin Van Buren, are you?

(Laughter) Yes. I am. I am a descendant of the eighth president's uncle. In fact, I was a park ranger at the Martin Van Buren National Historical site, which just happened to be in my hometown of Kinderhook, New York. I worked there for two summers in college—and yes I got the job because of my name! It was a great place to work, you had the opportunity to wear a lot of hats, not only was I a park ranger, but we were also able to work with the school programs, create our own tours, work with the gift shop, etc. It really taught me how a museum works.

How did you become interested in historic houses?

My family owns a small real estate agency in upstate New York and I've been "showing houses" since I've been about four. My parents and grandfather would take me along with them to show houses. I come from a very historic community, with Dutch and colonial homes dating to the early 1700s. Just by being inside of so many houses, I learned to discern the dif-



Kari Van Buren, Smith's Castle's new resident director. Photo: Darlene Trew Crist.

ferences in architectural styles. My family isn't a sports-minded family; instead, we would take a drive on the weekends to visit museums in the area, which piqued my interest in historic preservation, architecture, and museums. Around 13, I started working at the Columbia County Historical Society, at first I just cleaned the museum, but eventually I became a receptionist and guide for the museum on college breaks.

Tell me a little about your educational background.

I did my undergraduate work at Salve Regina University in Newport. I majored in history with a

double minor in English literature and cultural and historic preservation. After graduation, I stayed in Rhode Island for a year, working in a hotel in Newport, and trying to figure out where to go next. I knew that I wanted to go into historic preservation or museum work, I just didn't know how to get there. One of my undergraduate professors, Elizabeth Delude-Dix, encouraged me to go to look into graduate schools. I ended up following her advice, and moved to Philadelphia to attend the Penn Design, at the University of Pennsylvania, where I earned an MS in historic preservation. The program there

—continued on page 10

Inside

2	President's Note
3	Trustees Establish Endowment
4	CAP Conservators Survey Castle
6	Lodowick's Desk and Bookcase
	Insert Kids' Corner
8	Recent Events
12	Spring Calendar

President
Christine Kalina

Vice President
Jules Cohen

Treasurer
James Powell

Secretary
Guy J. Natelli

Past President
Janet W. Breault

Board of Trustees
Carol Allen
John Aubin
Peter Dunston
Betty Fenik
Joyce Fuller
Norma LaSalle
Carol Palmer
Karen Pizzarusso
Margaret Skenyon
Betsy Steinman
John Weaver

Resident Director
Kari Van Buren

Editorial Staff
Darlene Trew Crist
Neil Dunay
Norma LaSalle

Kids' Page Editors
Diane Amaral
Maureen Danforth
Christine Kalina

Graphic Designer
Darrell McIntire

Castle Chronicle is published quarterly by the Cocumscussoc Association at Smith's Castle

55 Richard Smith Dr.
Wickford, RI 02852

E-mail:
smithscastle@earthlink.net

Web site:
www.smithscastle.org

Subscriptions are by Smith's Castle membership only, beginning at \$25.

The views expressed by contributors to *Castle Chronicle* are not necessarily those of the Cocumscussoc Association.

Note from the President

After working many long hours, the Search Committee selected a final candidate and recommended Ms. Kari Van Buren to serve as our Resident Director. The Search Committee was led by Guy Natelli, who did an admirable job coordinating the committee, scheduling interviews, handling correspondence, and tabulating results. We cannot thank him enough for donating his time, energy, and many talents. Members of the Search Committee were Deb Britton, Peter Dunston, Martha Dwyer, Linda Eppich, Betty Fenik, and Chris Kalina. Each committee member contributed countless hours reviewing resumes, generating interview questions, conducting interviews, and meeting with other committee members. Thank you to one and all. And so we begin a new chapter in the history of Cocumscussoc. Please introduce yourselves to Kari and make her feel welcome.

As we look forward to the holiday season, please mark your calendars for Christmas at the Castle, December 4 and 5 from 12–4. This year's theme is "Christmas on the Cove." This holiday tradition is a wonderful way to begin the holidays and support the Castle. Christmas at the Castle brings hundreds of visitors to the site and with it traffic congestion. Please remember that Richard Smith Drive is a public road and be considerate of our neighbors when driving onto the site and parking.

The Annual Meeting for the Cocumscussoc Association is scheduled for January 28th. All members are encouraged to attend as we elect new officers and trustees for the coming year.

The focus for this year's Annual Fund Drive is Collections. This fall, the Castle participated in the Collections Assessment Program. Your contribution to this fund drive will provided support to meet the critical needs identified by this assessment program. In addition, a portion of the funds will be set aside to establish an Endowment Fund for the organization. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to Smith's Castle as part of your end-of-the-year giving.

As the year draws to a close I extend a heartfelt thank-you to all the talented and dedicated volunteers who have contributed so much to the Association this year. I am often asked how Cocumscussoc accomplishes so much with one paid position. My response is always the same, our incredible volunteers. We are so fortunate to have such a supportive membership. Each and every one of you are the reason Smith's Castle has earned such a wonderful reputation throughout the state for both excellence in educational programming for children and adults and preservation of this wonderful Rhode Island treasure. Best wishes for the New Year.

—Christine Kalina

Welcome New Members

Linda Lundblad
Deborah St. Pierre
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Parente
Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Jones
Ms. Joan Plante
Terri Fox
Annette Feldman and Family
Paul Marshall
Elizabeth Delude-Dix
Walter and Mary-Kay Carr
Jack and Karen Van Buren
Carolyn Robb

—as of 11/22/04

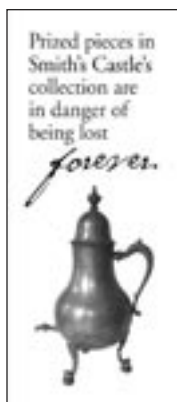
Bequests to Smith's Castle

Did you know that, while 80 percent of Americans make charitable gifts, only about eight percent make a charitable bequest in their will? Once family members have been provided for, a charitable bequest can also transmit your values into the future. Just think of the good works that could be funded if more people put, say, five percent of the remainder of their estates into charitable causes.

We know thoughtful people who believe in Smith's Castle and North Kingstown's historic preservation will seriously consider making a future gift provision. Please contact the office (294-3521) for suggested wording to discuss with your legal advisor.

—Peter Dunston

2005 Annual Fund to Benefit Collections



Our Annual Fund Drive is underway. This year's focus is the Castle's collections. Your annual gift will be used to begin a Preservation Plan, which will include the purchase of museum-quality storage furniture as well as air conditioners and dehumidifiers. In addition, half of the annual fund proceeds will go into a newly created Smith's Castle endowment fund to help build a strong financial base for the future. Please respond generously so we can continue to bring alive the stories of life and

times at the Castle through hundreds of historically important objects that we hold in trust. ■

Trustees Vote to Establish Endowment

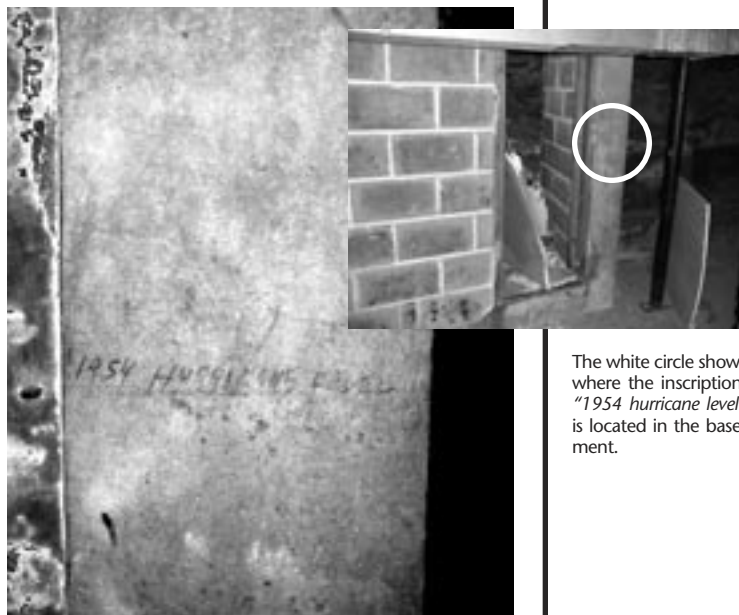
At its October meeting, the trustees of the Cocumscussoc Association voted to establish an Endowment Fund and to allocate a portion of the receipts of every year's annual fund drive to build its assets. The purpose of the fund will be to provide operating income in future years when the flow of monies from memberships, visitors, or special events falls below normal levels. It can also be a source for money required for emergencies such as hurricanes or fires.

Financial analysts maintain that, over the past fifty years, the principal in an endowment fund would have grown to keep pace with inflation if no more than five to six percent of its capital had been withdrawn in any year. To follow this guideline and to provide annual funds totaling (say) \$25,000 per year the fund principal would have to be in the \$500,000 range. One can see that it will be many years before our fund reaches that level and that it will not be a source of significant operating income until it does. But the board recognizes the need for the fund and has agreed that it should be nurtured and grown so that some day it will provide financial protection for us.

Besides obtaining monies from annual drives, the fund can grow if members of the Association make bequests leaving a portion of their estates to the endowment fund after they have provided for their family and other estate needs. Members are urged to speak with their estate attorneys about revising their wills to accomplish this worthwhile objective. ■

Fifty Years Ago at Smith's Castle

Smith's Castle's basement was damp this year, but not as wet as 50 years ago when Hurricane Carol flooded the area. CAP surveyor Sara Chase was delighted to see that someone had marked how high the water had stood in the flooded basement following the 1954 hurricane (the high water mark is at 4' 2-1/2"). The award-winning colonial garden, which had just been installed one year earlier, was washed away, and boats were lifted up onto the Castle's front lawn. This mark serves as a good warning that emergency planning must be a critical part of our collections care.



The white circle shows where the inscription, "1954 hurricane level" is located in the basement.

It's That Time of Year Again Volunteer Hours Due

It's time to submit your annual volunteer hours report. There are forms in the office if you don't have one, or just call in your hours to Kari, 294-3521. Dates aren't necessary, just the amount of time you have worked. Hours are categorized so let us know, for example, that you worked on a special event or volunteered on a committee. **Please submit your hours by January 10** so a report can be ready for Annual Meeting on January 28. Both your volunteer time and your report are important to the Castle. Thank you! ■

Conservators Survey Castle Collections

A Collections Assessment Program (CAP) grant awarded to Smith's Castle earlier this year brought two conservator surveyors to our site in September. Sara Chase, architectural preservationist, and Alexandra Allardt, objects conservator, came to examine the buildings and the collections, respectively, for a period of two days in September. And wouldn't you know it—two days before the survey, the Castle experienced one of the worst mold attacks on collections in recent years, and one very damp basement!

The conservators looked under eaves and dormers, in attics and under furniture, inside drawers and boxes—in both buildings. The mold was only one of the problems discovered. As was originally thought by staff and volunteers, the environment is one of the most serious problems for both the collections and the buildings. The very wet summer season only accentuated the problems this year. Definitely expect dehumidifiers in the Castle in the future! Storage for the collections, with the Annex's limited space in mind, was discussed with Ms. Allardt. Ms. Chase looked closely at the Castle's previous preservation efforts by examining photographs and building plans.

The final reports from the conservators are not due for several months. Likely, they will highlight environmental problems and will recommend improved policies in the areas of collections' care and building maintenance. Goals, outlined by the original application for the CAP, included development of a long-

range building maintenance plan, environmental monitoring, improved collections storage areas, an emergency response plan for collections in addition to the current building emergency response plan, and development of a long-range preservation plan. The latter will assist in gaining more federal funding in the future for conservation issues, specifically through small, competitive grants for collections.

Barbara Carey, former resident director, was instrumental in securing this grant. No one knew we would be doing this without her expertise and guidance. The volunteers who worked with the two conservators were Chris Kalina, John Weaver, Neil Dunay, and Linda Eppich. No one will forget the great party at the home of Jules and DeDe Cohen. Thank you, Cohens, for some wonderful memories! ■

—Linda Eppich

The Conservation Assessment Program is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and administered by Heritage Preservation. It is a non-competitive funding program, meaning that there are no outside reviewers who read the applications. IMLS awarded \$846,700 in CAP grants in 2004. The majority of these went to small institutions, like Smith's Castle.



Architectural preservation consultant Sara Chase discusses the configuration of the stairhall door to the second floor with Neil Dunay during her survey of the Castle building. Photo: Linda Eppich.



Alexandra Allardt, objects conservator, takes stock of collections storage facilities in the Annex. Photo: Linda Eppich.

Call for Volunteers

Observers, when first introduced to the quantity and quality of work produced here at Smith's Castle, often express surprise that it is achieved almost wholly through the efforts of a very committed corps of volunteers. It is one of our greatest achievements and one of our greatest challenges: Our work force is very fluid, always changing, and ever in need of new blood.

The day-to-day work of the Castle is carried out by committees that are engaged in a myriad of activities from talking to listening, reading to writing, knitting to gardening. There is certainly a task to match your skills and interests.

The committees are collections, development, docents, youth education, adult education, buildings, grounds, fundraising, grant writing, long range site

planning, marketing, public relations, membership, nominating committee, publications, site development, strategic planning, office work... and the list goes on. If you're bored and want to try something new, we have you covered. Phone Kari Van Buren at the office, 294-3521, for more information. ■

Organizers Urgently Needed

We are looking for two people to co-chair a fall living history event, similar to Plantation Days, but revamped with a new name and new look. Contact Kari at the office, 294-3521. **The deadline is December 15, 2004.**

2004 R.I. Docent Symposium

Inspired Docents Equal Engaged Audiences

Smith's Castle played a prominent role in planning and presenting this year's Docent Symposium, held on September 27th at the Roger Williams Park Zoo. The planning for this bi-annual event began in September 2003 with Barbara Carey, Mary Nunes, and Bob Hocking working on the committee. Other organizations represented were the John Brown House, the RISD Museum, RWP Zoo, and the Newport Art Museum.

This committee came together, bringing with them ideas and comments from their docents, and it wasn't long before a common theme appeared: Inspired docents will engage their audience, no matter who that audience is. Whether presenting a tour to school children, an elder hostel, family descendants, or visitors from abroad, a docent needs to be able to connect with each visitor.

Of the five break-out sessions offered, Smith's Castle played a major role in the presentation of two: "What Do Teachers Want?" and "Thinking Outside the Box" allowed Smith's Castle to showcase our strengths when it comes to supporting teachers in the quest to bring lessons to life and in using creative, multi-sensory interactive interpretation to make meaningful connections with visitors. Chris Kalina helped coordinate the teacher panel, made up of Deb Britton from Forest Park Elementary School, Lanie

Hoskins and Linda Warzycha from the Pawtucket Elementary Schools, and Peter Fagan, a former teacher from St. Michael's in Newport. Chris was also a panelist for "Thinking Outside the Box" and received rave reviews—"The interpretive ideas were excellent!" and "The woman from Smith's Castle who did one of the group activities in 'Thinking Outside the Box' was outstanding. I hated to see that session end."

Our docents who attended the symposium found the day to be stimulating and reinforcing. Dianne McGowen said, "It is a wonderful sharing and learning experience. It's a great opportunity to get together with docents from other places and I always come back with some new tools for the trade." Melissa Powers also liked the camaraderie with docents from other museums, and Virginia Miller was impressed with the fact that statistics show that visitors, on average, only remember 10 percent of what they are told on a tour and that visual stimulation is retained better than verbal. She joked that she would be adding "Now LOOK at that!" to her tour. Other docents attending were Marcia Brennan, Florence Gaylin, Bill Prescott, Cathe Rezendes, Kim Clarke, and Wilfred Royle. ■

—Mary Nunes

Lodowick Updike's Magnificent Mahogany Masterpiece



Lodowick Updike II's desk and bookcase at Winterthur is one of only nine, six-shell desk and bookcases known today. The original owners of only four of these are known with certainty (Nicholas Brown, John Brown, Elisha Potter, and Lodowick Updike II). None are signed or labeled by their makers.³ (The John Brown House has a Providence-made, nine-shell desk and bookcase that belonged to Joseph Brown.) Photo courtesy of Winterthur Museum.

When Lodowick Updike II inherited Smith's Castle and its vast holdings from his father, Daniel, in 1757, Cocumscussoc had reached its economic peak. He inherited a vast extent of land, including three working farms of hundreds of acres each, multiple lots in the village of Wickford, and a family homestead that recently (about 1738) had been updated from a weathered and tired gabled Elizabethan house to a fashionably light and elegant Georgian-style mansion.

Lodowick Updike II, at age 32, became one of the wealthiest men in South County—and a prime match for marriage. In 1760, Lodowick married Abigail Gardiner, the 20-year-old daughter of John and Mary Gardiner, who owned a large estate just below South Ferry. Lodowick brought his new bride to Smith's Castle, and they began a long life together.

It was about this time that Lodowick—in his prime, newly wed, and presiding over a vast family fortune—indulged in a personal extravagance. He purchased a desk. But not just any desk; only a Newport-made, block-and-shell bookcase and desk would do.

Thus, about 1760, Smith's Castle became home to one of the most exceptional, most beautiful, and most valuable pieces of Colonial American furniture ever produced. To scholars and connoisseurs Newport block-and-shell bookcase desks are technical and stylistic masterworks representing the pinnacle achievement of the colonial cabinetmaker. Their creators lavished unprecedented attention upon them, reflecting the status and wealth of the customers who would ultimately purchase them—prosperous merchants, wealthy entrepreneurs, cultured landowners, and respected lawyers.¹ Lodowick Updike, like his father and grandfather before him, was all of these.

Unfortunately, we don't know for certain in which room of the house Lodowick placed this grand piece. It is possible it was tucked away in his office (today the gift shop), where we know his father kept his desks and bookcases. More likely, an impressive piece like this would have been displayed in a more prominent room. Abigail's 1812 will mentions "*my book Case standing the great Chamber.*" This room may have been today's Updike Dining Room, which is certainly the most elegant room in the house.

One can imagine Lodowick's business associates and important guests arriving by boat from Newport to the Updike docks on the cove. These guests would have been greeted with extensive formal gardens at the front of house, a landscape that Lodowick himself may have laid out with his recent inheritance. Once at the house, they would have been welcomed into the light and cheerful stair hall and then into the Great Chamber. Although this room is large by colonial standards, it would have been dominated by the magnificent new desk. Visitors would have no doubt as to the wealth and importance of their young host.

Upon Lodowick's death in 1804, Abigail inherited all of the household furniture. As prescribed in her will of 1812, the desk and bookcase passed to her son, Wilkins Updike. It must have held a special place in his new home in Kingston, and we can imagine he wrote many a passage of his *History of the Narragansett Church* at that very desk. When Wilkins died in 1867, he willed all of his furniture to his unmarried daughter Aritis, providing upon either her marriage or her death that her inheritance be distributed equally among her siblings. Apparently, Wilkins' daughter Abigail (Mrs. Henry Hidden) eventually acquired the desk in this distribution. It was later inherited by Walter Hidden, their third son, passed to his daughter Mary (Hidden) Lee, wife of Howard Lee, and eventually to her son Walter, whose name was legally changed from Lee to Hidden. H.F. DuPont purchased the desk from Mrs. Walter (Lee) Hidden of Providence, Rhode Island, in 1932; he donated it to the Winterthur Museum of Wilmington, Delaware in 1960.²

Today, only nine, six-shell desk and bookcases are known to exist. Eight of the nine, including Updike's, are in museum collections. The one desk that remains in private hands, when last on the market in 1989, was purchased for \$12.1 million—an all-time record price for any piece of American furniture. ■



◀The interior of Winterthur's desk has sliding panels at the sides that enclose 'secret' compartments between the case sides and the inner cedar lining. Discovered hidden behind these panels were 24 paper-wrapped packets of handmade 18th century needles in several lengths (11/16" to 1-1/2") as well as several sizes of wire gages and eye openings. One packet is inscribed with the dates 'January 23, 1761' and '1762.' Needles were among the dry goods imported from England, and there are persistent references to the difficulties of obtaining them in New England."⁴

We can imagine Abigail Updike carefully concealing her precious needles, tucking them safely away in the same bookcase where her husband kept his vital business papers. Photo courtesy of Winterthur Museum.

References

1. Wendy A. Cooper, "207: Desk-and-Bookcase, Newport, Rhode Island, 1760-1785." In Nancy E. Richards and Nancy Goyné Evans, *New England Furniture at Winterthur: Queen Anne and Chippendale Periods*. University Press of New England, 1997, p. 439.
2. *Ibid.* p. 442
- 3, 4. *Ibid.* pp. 440-441



For more information about Lodowick Updike's desk and the eight other Newport block-and-shell bookcase and desks known today, see *New England Furniture at Winterthur* by Nancy E. Richards and Nancy Goyné Evans, a Winterthur book distributed by University Press of New England.

Recent Events

Hands-On History

Our summer camp for kids, *Hands-On History* grew this year to accommodate 17 budding historians. The camp provides a living history experience for students in grades four through six. Participants experienced the daily routines of their 18th century counterparts first hand. Activities included: making punched tin lanterns, book binding, mapping and surveying, cooking, playing games, and a visit to the Old Narragansett Church and its historic cemetery. ■

Kids' Camp:

1. Kathleen Nelson makes johnny cakes as Carol Bozarth looks on.
2. Will Britton churns butter.
3. Lilly Bell, Kathleen Nelson, and Jessica Eldridge (l. to r.) play Jacob's Ladder.

Photos: Maureen Danforth



1.



2.



Diane McGowan. Photo: Chris Kalina



3.



Carol Bozarth carries water, 18th century style. Photo: Chris Kalina

Veterans' Day Parade

and pewter service. It proved to be a popular spot for the afternoon. Other demonstrations included food preservation, outdoor cooking, rug hooking, quilting, and candle making. Visitors were able to try their hand at all these tasks, and those who left the Castle in the darkening afternoon had their home-made candles to light the way. A colorful garland of drying corn and squash was left to decorate the split rail fence at the entrance to the site. ■

Again this year, Smith's Castle was well represented in North Kingstown's annual Veterans' Day Parade. An enthusiastic contingent of docents and volunteers donned period attire and fell in behind the Smith's Castle banner.

Men: Don't let Wilfred Royle have all the fun! Next year join him and the Smith's Castle group for this important march through town. ■



Scenes from Living History Day. Photos: Chris Kalina



Back row, (l. to r.): Grace Palmer, Diane Amaral, Janet Hatch, Wilfred Royle, Chris Kassal, Kari Van Buren, and Virginia Royle, Front row: Kelsey Brown, Helen Richter, and Dianne McGowan. Photo: Chris Kalina



Louise Richter, Sara Bell, and Rosie Bell. Photo: Chris Kalina



Wilfred Royle. Photo: Chris Kalina

Kari Van Buren (from page 1)



Byron, a six-week-old yellow Lab, has agreed to accept the position of assistant to the resident director, Kari Van Buren. In a conversation with Darlene Trew Crist, Byron said he probably wouldn't be able to catch as many mice [sic] as his predecessor, Ginger, but promised to be even more personable than Poca, who, after all, was "only a cat." Photo: Karen Van Buren.

really prepared me for this job. The courses that I took, the professors that I met, and the contacts that I made there will really come in handy at Smith's Castle.

How do you see your role at Smith's Castle?

Well, there's a lot to do here. I am very interested in the preservation of the house and the collection, and maximizing the use of all our wonderful resources. To do this, everyone who is interested in this house, will have to work together and that's where I see myself—helping to lead and facilitate the work that needs to be done. I'm really interested in, and excited about, working with the committees on a one-on-one basis and getting to know the people that have helped make Smith's Castle what it is today. I plan to have an open door policy, and am willing to hear everyone's suggestions, opinions, and criticisms. This is exactly where I want to be.

What are your priorities?

That's a tough question because I have so many. But, increasing membership is at the top of my list. Also, increasing our endowment is high on the list so we can continue to protect and preserve the house and its collections. I also feel that coming up with a furnishing's plan as an important priority. We're extremely lucky to have the inventories of Richard Smith, Jr. and Daniel Updike and need to figure out how to best use these. It would also be great to build up our school programs even more, and become more available to all the students in Rhode Island. I'd also like to see the historic garden fully restored, which the Master Gardeners of Rhode Island is already doing a terrific job at. As you see, the list can go on and on.

What is your vision for Smith's Castle?

In the future, I would like to see a separate space here at Smith's Castle that includes a visitors center and education center, where children and adults can have the opportunity to have hands-on experiences, and overall increase the work we do with schools. I would also like to see the role that Smith's Castle plays in the North Kingstown community continued and strengthened. It really is the community and the members of Smith's Castle that has made this organization what it is today. ■

Darlene Trew Crist, a *Chronicle* editor, is an award-winning writer and author of *American Gargoyles: Spirits in Stone*, 13 yet-to-be published children's books, and an adult novel. She also has written numerous articles for publications ranging from *Muse*, to *Healthy Kids*, to *Living Healthy Magazine*.

Martin Van Buren



- Dates of Presidency: 3/4/1837–3/3/1841
- Presidency Number: 8
- Number of Terms: 1
- Party: Democratic
- His Vice President: Richard M. Johnson
- Vice President for: Andrew Jackson (1833–1837)
- Cabinet Service: Secretary of State (Andrew Jackson, 1829–1831)
- Senator: New York (1821–1828)
- Governor: New York (1829)
- State Legislature: New York (1812–1820)

The Congdon family lived at Smith's Castle during the years of Martin Van Buren's public life (1812–1841). Benjamin and Phebe Congdon purchased the property from Wilkins Updike in 1812. Benjamin died just three years later. In 1817, widow Phebe married Benjamin's brother, Joseph Congdon. On March 18, 1838, Joseph Congdon died at age 73. Phebe continued to live in the house with one of her sons (probably Thomas) and his family until her death in 1858. The Congdons were buried in their own family plot at Cocumscussoc near the Updike cemetery, but their remains were moved to Elm Grove sometime after 1880.

Kids' Corner



Hi, my name is Spencer Tefft Booth and I am four years old. I like to cook and thought you may like to learn how to make Johnny Cakes. You need the following stuff.

Mixing bowl
Wooden spoons to stir
(just like they used in colonial days)
Measuring spoons
Griddle. I have an iron one, but
use an electric stove instead of a wood fire.
Measuring cup
Spatula to turn the Johnny Cakes.

1 cup white corn meal
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sugar
1½ cup boiling water

Wash your hands and get all the supplies together. In a mixing bowl put corn meal, salt, and sugar. (I had my mom boil the water and pour it into the dry ingredients.) Then mix with your wooden spoon until the batter is thick. Grease the pan or griddle before you put it on the stove and get it hot. Drop a big spoonful of batter on the pan or griddle. I like to add raisins or blueberries while they are cooking. The hard part is, don't turn them over for six minutes or until they start to brown on the bottom. Someone can help you turn them over and cook for another three to five minutes. Put them on a plate and put on butter, honey, or maple syrup. You can use all of them if you want! I think they are as much fun to eat as they are to make. Hope you like them, too.

If you don't have butter you can make it by getting a clean, and empty jar. Fill it one third of the way up with heavy cream. Put the top real tight and shake. I think it takes about a million shakes, or about five minutes, if you get help from a big person. Listen to the cream—it makes a noise. The cream becomes whipped cream and you can't hear it shake anymore. Keep on shaking and all of a sudden it makes a noise again—open the lid. Pour out the liquid, that is buttermilk, what is left is a butter ball. It is magic, I think. One of the jobs kids would have in the old days was to make butter in a butter churn. Do you think they had as much fun as we do making butter?



Kids' Corner

It is thought Native Americans showed the first English settlers how to cook with corn on hot stones, and johnnycakes soon became a common food for colonial New Englanders.

The origin of the word johnnycake is not known. Some people say it came from a boy's nickname—Johnny, just as it is spelled. Another explanation is that it came from the New England pronunciation of journey, because the cakes were taken on long trips. (Many people still call them journey cakes today.) Others say the name came from an old Native American word *jonakin*.

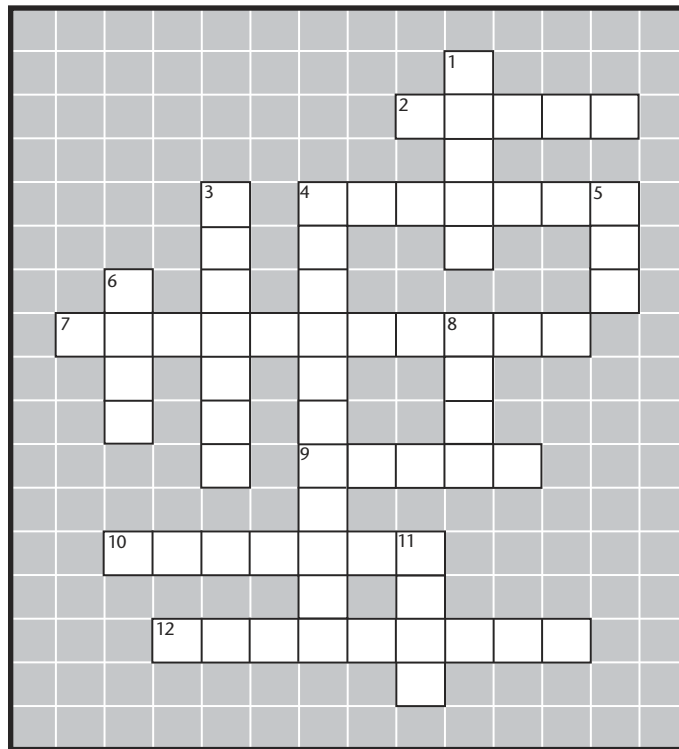
The main ingredient is ground corn. In colonial days, people would have to travel to the local grist mill, where the miller ground the corn kernels into flour or meal. To cook the johnnycakes, instead of using a pan or griddle, colonial cooks would often place them on a flat piece of wood called a johnnycake board, which was set up on its edge on the hearth in front of the fire while the cakes cooked.

Although the traditional recipe had only corn meal, water, and salt, today some people also add sugar, eggs, oil, and baking powder. Top them with honey or maple syrup. Yum!

Send your completed crossword to:

Smith's Castle
55 Richard Smith
Drive
Wickford, RI
02852

A winner will be chosen from the entries, and will be announced in the next *Chronicle*. The winner will receive a quill pen and ink. Have fun!



DOWN

1. In colonial days, johnnycakes were often made on a special piece of wood, called a johnnycake ____.
3. Johnnycakes can be cooked in an iron pan or ____.
4. Native Americans showed the English settlers how to cook corn on hot stones, the origin of our recipe for ____.
5. What you say after you eat your johnnycake!
6. The chief ingredient in this recipe is ____ meal.
8. Don't forget to turn ____ your johnny cakes or else they'll burn!
11. Some people think the cakes are named Johnny after a boy's nick ____.

ACROSS

2. Some people like their cakes topped with ____, a treat that comes from bees.
4. The name johnnycake may come from the word ____, because travelers took them on long trips.
7. Just like colonial cooks, you can mix your batter with a ____.
9. Colonial children had many chores, including making butter in a butter ____.
10. Another explanation for the origin of the word johnnycake is a Native American word, ____.
12. Colonial cooks couldn't just go to the supermarket for their corn flour; they had to get it from the ____.

Name	
Address	
City, State, Zip	



Consider a Gift of Membership in Smith's Castle for your family and friends this holiday season. It is a thoughtful gift that demonstrates your commitment to historic preservation and education—and it lasts all year!

\$25 Individual; \$40 Family; \$40 Grandparent.
Phone the Castle, (401) 294-3521, for details.

Smith's Castle gratefully acknowledges the support of its business members.

Guy J. Natelli
President
135 Greenwood Road
North Kingstown, RI 02852-6822

Natelli Systems Incorporated

Software Systems Development

voice: 401-294-4811
e-mail: gnatelli@natellisystems.com
url: www.natellisystems.com



23 Broad Street
Westerly, RI 02891-1868

Annual Meeting Cocumscussoc Association



Friday, January 28, 2005
**Please join us to begin the Castle
New Year together!**

6:00 Potluck Supper

Main Dish: Last name beginning A-I
Side Dish: Last name beginning J-Q
Dessert: Last name beginning R-Z
Tableware and beverage provided

7:00 Meeting

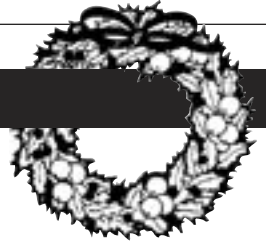
Election of Officers and Trustees
Awards

**Cold Springs Community Center
North Kingstown**

**RSVP 294-3521 or
smithscastle@earthlink.net**

The Cocumscussoc Association

This Winter at Smith's Castle



December

Day	Time	Event
Saturday, 4	Noon–4:00 p.m.	Christmas at the Castle
Sunday, 5	Noon–4:00 p.m.	Christmas at the Castle
Friday, 10	6:00–8:00 p.m.	Member-Guest Holiday Party

January

Day	Time	Event
Monday, 10	4:30 p.m.	Volunteer hours due in office
Friday, 28	6:00–8:00 p.m.	Potluck dinner followed by Annual Meeting at 7:00.

February

No events scheduled

March

No events scheduled

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

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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED
