

Castle Chronicle

Volume 8 Number 3 ■ Fall 1999

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



We're Looking Good at Fifty

Inside

2
President's
Note

3
Docents'
Activities

3
Plantation
Days

4
Cooking
Class

5
Gift Shop

6
Thank Yous

It was great to have 67 folks out to celebrate the Cocumscussoc Association's fiftieth birthday. The evening included special recognition of Life Members, which designates the highest membership giving level of \$500. This membership level does not require annual renewal. Those present to receive certificates were Katherine and William Alexander, Les and Muriel Flood, Bette Lou and Bob Pease, Mary and Bob Shillaber, Curtis and Betty Givan, and Dick Zimmermann. Others unable to attend were Mrs. Malcolm Chace, Jr., Eliza Collins, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Devoe, Bruce and Ellie Ferguson, Joyce Fuller, Robert Allen Greene, Andrew and Kathleen

Mauro, Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Meyer, Johanna H. Ross, Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe, Cathy and Russell Shippee, Mr. and Mrs. T.E. Steere, Mr. and Mrs. Gill Thorpe, and Helen Zimmermann.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Maggie MacGowan, a former Steward at the Castle who died recently.

The evening continued with the return of some colorful characters in Castle history, wafting forth from the crystal ball of Dr. James MacSparran, played by Lew Towler. Joan and Richard Smith, Jr. appeared in the likenesses of David and Betty Follansbee, demonstrating the perennial problem that the boat is just never quite big enough! Bob Pease

brought mid 18th century politics and Israel Phillips, the Updike overseer, to flesh. Elizabeth Singleton as portrayed by Nancy Birch hasn't lost a speck of her party spirit. Jan Breault gave us a promising glimpse into the future. Bill Curtis, a North Kingstown musician, delighted guests with traditional folk music.

Kudos to the membership committee, chaired by Lew Towler, for overall planning, with a special nod to Dot Dion, our twentieth century party planner supreme, who coordinated the delicious refreshments. Thanks too to **Newport Creamery** for the special price on the ice cream. Dick Breault and Bill Carey recorded the event with great photos. ■



Colorful Characters: Participants in Cocumscussoc Association's 50th birthday celebration included (left to right) Nancy Birch, David and Betty Follansbee, Lew Towler, and Bob Pease. Photo by Dick Breault.

The Castle Chronicle is published quarterly by the Cocumscussoc Association.

President

Bette Lou Pease

Vice President

Richard M. Bowen, Jr.

Treasurer

Mary Shillaber

Secretary

Cathy I. Shippee

Board of Trustees

Jan Breault

Doris Dion

Louise Duckworth

Linda Eppich

Alex Fenik

Dr. William Ferrante

Joyce Fuller

Robert L. Holland

Pat Labrie

Urban R. Nannig

James Peters

Alfred D. Steinman

James C. Sullivan

Rev. Lew W. Towler

Mary Turkel

Albert R. Vanderbilt

Lee Williams

Richard Z.

Zimmermann, Jr.

Resident Manager

Barbara Carey

Managing Editor

Richard M. Bowen, Jr.

Editors

Barbara Carey

Bill Carey

Neil Dunay

Production Assistant

Roberta Hale

Graphic Design

Darrell McIntire

Note from the President

A glorious 50th Birthday Party was held on the Castle grounds on August 12. It was great to meet new members and renew acquaintances with old friends.

The Trustees met for a special meeting on July 19. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss areas of emphasis for the next five years. It was decided to focus on the history of Rhode Island development through three eras: Native American days, early colonial days, and plantation days. Our teaching will be supported by physical evidence of Rhode Island history that is connected to Smith's Castle. We are invigorated by these ideas and excited about moving to the next stage in planning. Committees will be working in the following areas: education, fund raising through grants, fund raising through special events, historical research, maintenance and use of property, membership, and publicity/marketing. We'd like to involve you. Give it some thought and give us a call.

—Bette Lou Pease

The View from the Annex Window

It's been an exciting, busy and challenging first few months as the Resident Manager! I've met so many wonderful Castle members and am grateful for all the support as I learn the Castle ropes. The Docents who show up with smiles and keep us afloat are truly an amazing group. I especially thank Bette Lou for always being on the other end of the phone line to patiently answer myriad questions and troop over to the Castle day after day after day—a truly dedicated President! Special thanks too to her faithful sidekick, Bob, who is always “on call” and to Dick Bowen for his wise counsel and overall support. I'm eager to get to know more of you. If we haven't met, please give a call or stop by to say hello and share your good ideas. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Until we close after Plantation Days, the office is closed on Tuesday and Wednesday. Then we resume a Monday through Friday office schedule. The office number is 294-3521. The welcome mat is always out!

—Barbara Carey

New Memberships Last Through 2000

At our Association's 50th Birthday Party, Jan Breault, Membership Committee member, expressed vision of a bright future for Smith's Castle with expanded energy, enthusiasm, stability, and lots of new members. With this spirit in mind, we hope that if your membership is not up-to-date, you'll renew for the concluding months of 1999. We also appreciate your nominations of new members. One of the great membership benefits is free admission to Plantation Days.

We have redefined the membership year to coincide with the calendar year. So starting in 2000, the annual membership year will be from January through December. Renewal notices will be sent at the first of each year. This year only, as we transition into the new system, anyone renewing after September 30, 1999, will receive full membership benefits valid through the year 2000.

—Lew Towler, Membership Chair
(a.k.a. Doctor James MacSparran)

To ensure continued receipt of *The Castle Chronicle* be sure to keep your membership up-to-date!

1999 New Members

Jeffrey and Lisa Payne

Emily McKenney

Jan Comstra

Elizabeth Fenik and Burton Raymond, III

Bill and Barbara Carey

Roger and Linda Thibodeau

Betsy Binger and Jerry Well

Mary and Glen Gardiner

The following joined through the Junior Docent Program. The Junior Docent name is in parentheses.

The Synott Family (Elyssa)

The Hall Family (Carrie)

The Bozarth Family (Morgan)

The Foote Family (Emily)

The Cranston Family (Ryan)

The Bissonette Family (Mary)

The Long Family (Brielle)

The Martinique Family (Rebecca)

Membership Statistics

Non-business membership units: **240**
(individual, family, patron, sustaining & life members)

Membership receipts to date: **\$9,902**

Help us reach our goal of **\$15,000!**

Businesses Welcomed as Charter Members

We're delighted to welcome **Burnham Excavation, Inc., Sullivan & Sullivan, P.C., Roger M. Turkel, D.D.S., Warburton-Shippe Insurance Company, and Washington Trust Co.** as charter members of the new Smith's Castle Business Member program. A brochure describing the program has been sent to the North Kingstown business community with an invitation to “work together with us to ensure the continued vitality of our historic community.” We're offering 3 levels of membership, The Updike Family at \$100, The Richard Smith Family at \$250 and Roger and Mary Williams at \$500, with member benefits increasing at each level. Beyond the usual member benefits, the business members will receive a family pass for employee use, recognition in local news media and in the meeting room at the Castle, and a window decal. Higher level benefits will include use of the meeting room, guest passes to special receptions and events, as well as special mention in promotional literature and programs.



Docents Keep Castle Afloat—Need Recruits

The Docents have been busy all summer giving tours of the Castle. To date, our active little band has given tours to over 1100 Castle guests, including five groups of students. In addition, the Docents, assisted by our active Junior Docents as well as other volunteers, were on hand to make the Strawberry Festival the success it was.

—Joyce Fuller

A new docent orientation meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on September 23 at the Castle. We'll answer questions and provide details on training, costume, and time commitment. This is a golden opportunity to learn more about our history and be part of the education mission. Docenting is great if you enjoy working with the public. Pass the word to your friends and neighbors who might be interested. Call 294-3521 for more information and to RSVP for the orientation.

Junior Docents Have Active Summer

The Junior Docents have been active over the summer; we completed making our costumes, and began a room-by-room study of the Castle's artifacts and its history. In July, the juniors helped with spinning, weaving, and woodworking, as well as docenting for the Pawtucket YMCA. A surprise visit by Katherine Woodhouse-Beyer from Brown University enabled us to add some archeology to the tour. We are currently learning other skills such as embroidery. In preparation for Plantation Days, we recently made soap. We have several other learning projects to complete and look forward to sharing these with the public on Plantation Days.

—Louise Duckworth

Smith's Castle has a new garden of dye plants tucked in next to the Carey's vegetable garden. It was dug and built by the Junior Docents with help from Brielle Long and Rebecca Long. Audrey Moncrieff gave our wish list to Judy Gould at **Bald Hill Nursery** and returned with such a generous donation of plants that the garden was an instant beauty. The black-eyed susan, coreopsis, and striking large, red hibiscus are perennials, and while they are establishing, marigolds are filling their future growing space. The delicate deep red flowers are *pentas lanceolata*, a relative of the madder plant so important in colonial dying. This fall, the Junior Docents will begin to experiment on dying wool yarn with the blossoms collected over the summer.

—Diane Long

Plantation Days Volunteers Still Needed

The annual Plantation Days will be held on Saturday, October 2, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday, October 3, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is a celebration of the living skills of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with about 25 units in a large colonial encampment on the Castle grounds. Rub elbows with Revolutionary War reenactors, craft demonstrators, and entertainers from throughout New England and Pennsylvania. Watch the Dutch ship *Brandaris* drop off indentured servants brought from England to be sold in the colonies. The ship will be offshore between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. both days. This historic yacht helped evacuate troops at Dunkirk in WW II.

We're still in need of volunteers. If you would like to help out, please call Pat Labrie, chairperson, at 539-9921 or Barbara Carey at 294-3521.



Felicity Raises Funds

Have you seen Felicity Merriman yet? She's absolutely adorable. What a bright idea for a fundraiser from those super idea people, Jan and Dick Breault! (They donated her—thanks you two!) We know all you members got the mailing about Felicity because checks and ticket stubs appear in our mailbox almost daily. Thank you for your support. If you haven't "taken a chance" yet on winning her, there's still time. The drawing will be on Sunday, October 3, at Plantation Days. Need more tickets? Call 294-3521.

We also have a beautiful handmade "extra" to go home with Felicity. Can you guess what it is? Thank you, Doris Armstrong, for this wonderful surprise gift.

To date (August 29) members and other visitors have purchased 572 tickets with a return of \$563. Maybe we can make it to \$1000. What do you think?

Strawberry Festival Sets Record



With all the help of our Docents and spouses, the June 12 Festival was our best ever. Last minute details were taken over by our male spouses, i.e. setting up, parking, and cleaning up! We had 28 hard working volunteers who made a perfect day. The overtime hours emphasized the need for additional volunteers in the future. Special thanks go to Shirley Burnham for all the exhibitors, Barbara Carey

for the fantastic publicity, and all the people we put to work at the last hours. Our Docents not only served the Castle all day, but they also baked all the shortcakes, gave tours, took money, told stories, answered a million questions, and were back the next day for regular Castle hours. Our new Junior Docents (11 of them) entertained with children's games which were a big hit. They did a super job!

—Lee Williams

Book Review

Two Paths in the Wilderness

Ellen Eaton Wilson

Published by Crane Books



The time is 1675. The place is the "Swanzy" area of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Two young men approach manhood on the tides of King Philip's War. Outaquos, the Wolf, is a Wampanoag clinging to the old ways while English settler Caleb looks forward to life in this new world. The two young men meet while hunting a marauding wildcat. When they kill the wildcat with both gun and arrow, they share the kill and become friends. As each family warns against the other, the boys continue their trust of each other. Caleb helps Outaquos when he gets in trouble with the English settle-

ment, and Outaquos returns the favor when Caleb and his father wander onto Indian land in search of their horses. As the story continues, war grows around them and they find themselves on their way to Rhode Island. Caleb is sent to Smith's Garrison with the Militia while Outaquos takes his grandparents to the Great Swamp. How the young men maintain their friendship and help each other survive the Great Swamp War is an exciting finish to this book. A great book to be read aloud to the family or as a gift to a Junior High Student. It is available at the Castle Gift Shop.

—Jan Breault

Charitable Giving Yields Tax Savings

As you consider providing meaningful support of the work of Smith's Castle, there are many options available that can benefit both you and the Cocumscussoc Association. You can make lifetime gifts and have the pleasure of witnessing the benefits of your gift, or you may choose to include the Association as a bequest in your will or estate plan. Ways of making charitable contributions include gifts of cash, appreciated stock, and life insurance.

Because the Cocumscussoc Association is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a public charity exempt from income taxes under Section 501c(3), your contributions qualify for the maximum deductibility for income, gift, and estate tax purposes.

One way to support our work is through a gift to our endowment, the Smith's Castle Fund, administered by the Rhode Island Foundation. This fund was created through the sale of a generous land donation by Emily Fuller Nicolson, the sister of our late caretaker, Nathan Fuller. The Smith's Castle Fund will provide us with income in perpetuity for restoration, maintenance and furnishings for the property.

We are grateful for your contributions at year end as well as throughout the year. We suggest you discuss these and other giving opportunities with your attorney, accountant, or tax advisor. If you would like to talk with us more about giving, please call 294-3521.

—Jim Sullivan

Rhode Island Foundation Visits the Castle

Meredith Swan, Donor Services Officer with the Rhode Island Foundation, coordinated a special June 23 visit to the Castle for 15 donors and prospective donors. They came following a focus group meeting at Quonset Point. Bette Lou Pease and

Betty Follansbee gave a tour of the house after Betty Follansbee presented a program on Commerce at Cocumscussoc. The guests were delighted with their visit, and the Foundation acknowledged its appreciation by extending a gift of \$100 to the Castle.

Cooking Class Sept. 23

On Thursday, September 23 from 1–3 p.m., Jean Chapman will lead an interactive Open Hearth Cooking Class. She'll teach participants how to prepare colonial recipes typical of autumn cooking, using period utensils such as the tureen and griddle. There will also be an opportunity to learn more about additional kitchen utensils in the collection. All participants will receive a booklet of recipes. The class is limited to 12 adults with a fee of \$10 for members and \$12 for non-members. Call 294-3521 by Friday, September 17 to register.



Open Hearth Cooking: Jean Chapman, who will lead the Sept. 23 open hearth cooking class, discusses colonial era kitchen utensils. Photo by Dick Breault.

Members Out and About

Congratulations to Mary Turkel, Trustee and Plantation Days Publicity Chair, for her appointment to the Advisory Board of the University College at Roger Williams University.

Good luck to Linda Eppich, Trustee and Furnishings Chair, in her expanded responsibilities as Chief Curator at the Rhode Island Historical Society. She will continue half time at the museum and work half time supervising all RIHS exhibitions at the new Heritage Harbor Museum.

Mark Your Calendars!

September 23, Open Hearth Cooking (See article on page 4)

October 2 and 3, Plantation Days

December 4 and 5, Castle open to the public for an old fashioned "Christmas at the Castle"

December 10, Castle Christmas Party for Members and Guests

Thank You Community Volunteers

Thanks to North Kingstown residents Robert Savory for grounds work and Jason Richards for grounds work and painting of the Castle bathroom. Also to Steven Riley, an illustrator from East Greenwich, for preparing artwork for our publications.

Smith Castle Gift Shop

New in the Gift Shop this year—A Docent Christmas Tree! Docents, and anyone that wishes to participate, will be hanging ornaments, to be sold, on the tree. The ornament may be handmade, bought, or from your own collection. Please price your own ornament, and thank you for your donation. Our shop is full of surprises for all ages with lots of great stocking stuffer items. Also, Gift Certificates are now available. Don't forget to bring your card for your member discount.

—Candace Bengston

Gift Shop Hours:

September

Friday, Saturday, Sunday
Noon–4:00

October 2, 11:00–5:00

October 3, 11:00–3:00

December 4–5, Christmas at the Castle

Education is Where It's At!

Since a major thrust in the new five-year plan for the Castle is "education, education, education", this committee has exciting work ahead. We are already brainstorming program ideas for the coming year, both for the fall semester for school children and the Spring/Summer of 2000. In addition to our regular tours, we are looking to reestablish our former success with school tours and trunk shows. We're also getting ready to mark the calendar with an array of new programs, including taking part in "May is Museum Month," a statewide emphasis in 2000. Docent recruitment, new docent orientation and new training plans are all in the works too. We hope our enthusiasm is infectious! Are you inspired? Jan Breault is Education Chair.

1999

TRAVEL GUIDE
to New England

Editors' PICK

Congratulations Smith's Castle

Smith's Castle is featured as an "Editors' Pick" in the 1999 *Yankee Magazine's Travel Guide to New England*. The Castle was included among regional restaurants, lodging, attractions, museums, and shops that are not to be missed, according to the travel experts who write the guide.

Copy Machine— The Last Hurrah!

It's almost over for our old faithful copy machine. We're looking for a replacement that will give us good quality service and not break the bank. If you've got any ideas, please call the office at 294-3521. Any gift is tax deductible to the extent of the law.

Classified

Volunteers Wanted

Handyman/Carpenter

Painters

Repair and maintenance for punt and skiff (Castle boats)

Seamstresses to repair textiles and do other sewing projects

Sign Maker (for special events)

Data Entry

Call 294-3521 to inquire.

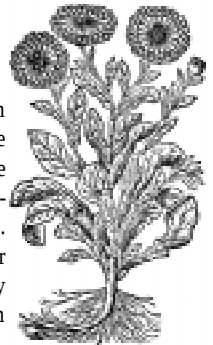
Lost and Found

Found: One lawn chair left at the Birthday Party. Call 294-3521.

18th Century Garden

The 18th century garden and the kitchen herb garden continue to flourish despite the oppressive heat and lack of rain. The donation of mulch by the Pecoizzi family of Coventry has been a salvation. Master gardeners continue to volunteer a few hours a week and several friendly bunnies and chipmunks have partaken of their favorite leaves and blossoms. The gardens have again been dug up, cleaned out, raked over, and mulched in order to create a neat finished look to the grounds. We are in the process of compiling a list of plants and a map of the gardens for a new brochure.

—Audrey Moncrieff



Students Lending a Hand

At press time we were notified that Smith's Castle is approved as a project site for the "Bryant Experience New Student Welcome Weekend." A group of Bryant College students worked on Castle grounds projects on Sunday, August 29. We're excited about their working with us and will give a full report on their efforts in the next issue.

Hearty Pats on the Back

Thanks to **Dick Bowen** and **Roberta Hale** for rounding up and processing the *Chronicle* stories. Welcome to **Bill Curey**, **Neil Dunay**, and **Darrell McIntire** who are new aboard the *Chronicle* staff and bring with them a wealth of new talent and ideas in design, writing, and editing.

Lee Williams and **Shirley Burnham** deserve mountains of sweet strawberries and cream for their tremendously successful Strawberry Festival.

To **Joyce Fuller** and **Trish Lopez**, and your faithful crew, our hats off to you! Your Docent leadership literally keeps the doors open.

Neither drought, heat, bugs, nor woodchucks can keep **Audrey Moncreiff** and her volunteers at bay. **Jim Peters** mows, clips, digs, and hauls brush faithfully. Thanks to all for the continued source of

joy for our senses. Thanks too to **Dick Zimmermann** and **Dick Bowen** for working on the garden hose.

Thanks to **Louise Duckworth**, **Diane Long**, **Jan Breault**, and **Pat Labrie** for leadership of Jr. Docents, both in the house and in the new dye garden. Thanks also for making the special YMCA tour a wonderful mini-Sturbridge. The Juniors, **Rebecca Long**, **Laura Martinique**, **Brielle Long**, and **Ryan Cranston** were an unforgettable addition to the day.

Candace Bengston, the Gift Shop is a delight—and smells soooooo good! You're a real pro.

Gratitude goes out to **Bette Lou** and all the many hands that helped her with the reception for the MacGowan family. Sincere thanks to **Jack** and **Lorrie MacGowan** for their gift to the Castle.

Many thanks to **Tom Spink** of North Kingstown for loaning and setting up the sound system for the Birthday Party and Memorial Service.

Marge Swift has thumbed phone book pages for 9 hours to give us a boost with our membership telephone list.

Help us with future thank yous. We don't want to leave anyone out. Please forgive us if we have.

A Note from Lorrie and Jack MacGowan

The MacGowan Family is deeply indebted to the Cocumscussoc Association for the courtesies extended to them on the occasion of the memorial service for their daughter, Maggie, a former Steward.

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