

# NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT

VOL. 10 NO. 2

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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## AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

President Helen Davidson and husband Jim represented the Society at the annual meeting of the Vermont League of Local Historical Societies at Strafford, Vermont, where the Society received an award of excellence in publication for the Society's four *Quarterlies* of 2002. These *Quarterlies* were Vol. 32 No. 1 "The Final Civil War Diary of Charles B. Mead of Company F First U.S. Sharpshooters", compiled and edited by Elaine G. Purdy; Vol. 32 No. 2 "July Guns of Colonial Patriots: The Battle of Hubbardton" by Carmine A. Pacca; Vol. 32 No. 3 "The Vermont Marble Company Strike of 1935-1936" by Douglas S. Lertola and Mary H. Fregosi; and Vol. 32 No. 4 "The Covered Bridges of Old Rutland Town: A Calendar" by Robert J. Cassidy. Covering the 18th to the 20th Century, they included military, social and technological history.

The Mead diary is one of the most informative of Civil War diaries and is the second one that the Society has published. The editing is superb and informative.

The Battle of Hubbardton issue is the result of nearly 40 years of research. It is meticulous in its notes and sources yet moving in its text which places the reader in intimate contact with the action of the battle. It presently stands as the best summary publication on the battle.

Much is said about the Vermont Marble Company Strike of 1935-1936 but little had been written prior to this article which was based on careful research of the *Rutland Herald*.

The last *Quarterly* was a new venture of presenting the *Quarterly* in the format of a calendar. This was so popular that the issue sold out and now is only available in photocopied format. The author has done a most thorough investigation of the bridges and their history. He found images of all and corrected a number of pieces of misinformation about a given bridge from primary sources. The Society is especially proud of the high level of research and writing represented in these issues.

## NEW EXHIBITS

Two new exhibits are currently on display at the Society. One is an extensive presentation of over 250 pieces of Native American arrowheads, spearpoints, knives, drills, scrapers, tomahawk heads and other tools of stone. These items, with very few exceptions, are from the Otter Valley and are the work of non-Vermont Native Americans who visited the area. There seems to be a total absence of Abnaki material. This collection is on loan from an anonymous member of the Society.

The second exhibit presents six large portraits from the Society's collection. Four of the items are paintings and two are photographic portraits, all from the 19th Century. The men represented are: John Strong, Walter C. Landon, and Solomon Foote. The women represented are: Mrs. John Strong, Harriett Mead Porter and Mrs. John Cramton.

## HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2003 DUES ?

## "HISTORICALLY SPEAKING" ON CHANNEL 15 IN RUTLAND

The Society produces "Historically Speaking" on cable Channel 15. A new program is produced each month. The series includes interviews and historical pictorial material in a rather flexible TV magazine format. The programs can be seen every Wednesday at 4:00 p.m., Thursday at 1:30 p.m. and Friday at 7:30 p.m. Videotapes of the following episodes can be obtained from Channel 15, Rutland Region Community Television, P.O. Box 500, Rutland VT 05702-0500. They are \$10 for each episode. Make checks payable to the above. You must provide a self-addressed padded bag with postage. Channel 15 provides the tape. Personal pickup is available. Call (802) 747-0151 for further information.

Episode # 45 - Tom Carpenter hosts Jim Davidson in a program regarding the purported horse race from Galveston, Texas, to Rutland, Vermont, in the fall of 1886. Frank Hopkins claims to have won this race but there was absolutely not one piece of evidence that the race ever happened. But the hoax didn't stop there. Frank claimed to have been hired by Buffalo Bill for his wild west show which also seems to be totally untrue. (See *News From Nickwackett*, Vol. 10 No. 1 p. 3 for a brief summary of this hoax.)

Episode # 46 - Jim Davidson hosts Kevin Graffagnino, new director of the Vermont Historical Society. The interview ranges from Mr. Graffagnino's views of history to his views on the future of history in Vermont. The interview also discusses the upcoming Vermont History Expo of 2003.

Episode # 47 - Tom Carpenter hosts Michael F. Dwyer in a program discussing health in Rutland one hundred years ago in 1903. The program covers the prevalent diseases and illnesses of the day and the treatments of that period. Death accompanied many conditions that would be considered minor today. Public health was just beginning to be overseen by a public health officer. Much of the material for the program came from the city records for deaths in Rutland in 1903 and the city report of the public health officer.

## HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS

The Society offered walking tours of Rutland's historic districts during the noon hour on Monday 2 June and Friday 6 June as a part of the "Heart a la carte" program of the Rutland Wellness Council. A drawing was held for an annual membership or subscription for one of the participants in the walking tours. Mark W. Kelley was the winner of the drawing. Jim Davidson and Carmine Pacca each hosted one tour.

## CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING

The central air conditioning units were installed in late May and are now functioning well. Thanks to all who helped make this happen.

## COMMITTEE CORNER

### Chairpersons

#### Archives Committee

Tom Carpenter - 773-3626

#### Artifacts Committee

Ann Glagola - 775-1302

#### Building Committee

Morris Tucker - 773-7356

#### Exhibit Committee

Jim Davidson - 773-7525

#### Finance Committee

Tom Carpenter - 773-3626

#### Historic Preservation Committee

David Nettleton - 438-2689

#### Library Committee

Ann Glagola - 775-1302

#### Membership Committee

Mary Segale - 773-2326

#### Personnel Committee

Mary Segale - 773-2326

#### Program Committee

Michael F. Dwyer - 483-6993

#### Publications Committee

Jake Sherman - 775-2784

#### Research Committee

Patty Pickett - 438-2759

#### Society Historian

Mary Segale - 773-2326

#### President

Helen Davidson - 773-7525

#### Board Chairperson

Michael F. Dwyer - 483-6993

## MEETINGS

President Helen Davidson and husband Jim represented the Society at the annual meeting of the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance in Barre, Vermont, on Monday 17 March at the Barre Opera House. The program and afternoon workshops were well worth the trip.

Helen and Jim also represented the Society at the annual meeting of the Rutland Region Community Television. The Society was recognized for completing four years of its "Historically Speaking" series. (See page 2 for recent programs and the schedule for viewing "Historically Speaking".)

## RECEPTIONS

President Helen Davidson and husband Jim represented the Society at the welcome reception for Kevin Graffagnino, new director of the Vermont Historical Society, on 24 April at the Vermont History Center in Barre. Kevin was a guest on "Historically Speaking" in late May.

Helen and Jim also represented the Society at the grand opening of the First Community Bank which now occupies the old Rutland Savings Bank location on the corner of Center Street and Merchants Row. It is good to see a bank fill the recently vacant landmark in downtown Rutland.

## VERMONT HISTORY EXPO

The Society did not have an exhibit at the Expo this year. Rather it chose to offer a "Swing Away" big band dance program on Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m. The program was offered on the stage in front of the main grandstand. A number of people enjoyed the music and a few couples danced. It was hoped that more folks would participate in the dancing. It was noted that most of the grandstand programs had only moderate-sized audiences.

## PHOTO REPRODUCTION PROGRAM

For some time now the Society has been offering a free service to assist and encourage organizations and individuals to consider using

reproductions of historic photos from the Society's archives in their homes and facilities. The Society will help in the selection process, arrange for the reproduction and give advice as needed. The customer pays the reproduction and framing costs. The Society charges no fee for its service or the use of its photos.

The Society benefits because the community becomes an exhibit space where a consciousness of the community's rich past can be developed. The organization or individual benefits from an attractive and attention-getting ambiance. Visitors become actively engaged in the setting.

This summer "The Maples", off Stratton Road, is installing 50 items and the Great Outdoors Trading Company on Woodstock Avenue has selected 20 items for its facilities.

## CLASS VISIT

Normally a class visit to the Society means that a group of youngsters will troop through the doors with their teachers and chaperones and be entertained and informed by a program.

On 25 June the Society hosted a class that was a bit different. It was the Class of 1943 from Proctor High School who were celebrating their 60th anniversary. They had made arrangements so that after their anniversary luncheon they could make a brief visit to the Society to view the exhibits and facilities. The Society is always happy to arrange for special group visits.

## CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

The Italian research group meets monthly to share progress and assign future tasks. New folks who wish to become part of the project are always welcome. The goal of the project is to identify every Italian immigrant family in Proctor, Rutland Town, West Rutland and Rutland City. A data base is being developed to preserve this information.

The Society continues to host the bi-monthly meetings of the Rutland Area Physical Activity Coalition (RAPAC) and the monthly meetings of the sub-committee on mapping trails. A city map has been produced and a Rutland County walking trails book is in preparation. Jim Tasse is the new director of RAPAC.

## PROGRAMS

Jim Davidson gave the Twilight Home-makers Club a brief tour of the historical pictorial exhibit at the Rutland City Hall on 25 March.

On 30 March, Jim Davidson made a presentation on "The Great Horse Race From Galveston, Texas, to Rutland, Vermont, in 1886" for the Pittsford Historical Society at the Pittsford Congregational Church. The presentation did not reveal the hoax until the end of the program.

The Society's Cultural Series at Eden Park was completed by Helen Davidson on 28 April. The series included a half-hour video program from the Society's "Historically Speaking" series on Rutland immigrant groups. Each month a program was devoted to a single ethnic group. This was followed by a social period of music and food associated with that group. During the series the ethnic groups selected were: the French, the Polish, the Irish and the Italian.

On 19 May Jim and Helen Davidson presented an Elderhostel program for the Old Homestead in Castleton. The program entitled "Made In Vermont" consisted of information about notable people, products and inventions that were made in Vermont. The program was offered in the format of a participant quiz.

On Monday morning, 21 July, Jim Davidson presented "An Overview of Rutland's History" at the Godnick Center. The presentation gave a brief summary of some of the major ele-

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## DUES SCHEDULE

Sponsor	\$50.00	Students	\$8.00
Contributing	\$20.00	(18 & under)	
Regular	\$10.00	Senior citizens	\$8.00
		(62 & up)	
Life Membership			\$200.00
(Individuals only)			
Memorial Membership			\$200.00

ments of Rutland's history from the charter in 1761 to Rutland's renaissance in the 1990s

The monthly musical programs at Eden Park continue to thoroughly entertain the residents. Jim Davidson takes pains to select and record music of the past that provokes memories and stimulates the heart. Many a hand or foot becomes engaged with the music.

## RUTLAND ON THE HISTORY CHANNEL

Jim Davidson was interviewed in New York on 28 April for an upcoming program by the History Channel on the "Frank Hopkins Hoax". Frank claimed to have won a horse endurance race from Galveston, Texas, to Rutland, Vermont, in 1886. However, there is no evidence that the race ever happened. From there Frank offered numerous stories of his life in the West which again seem to have no basis in fact. Jim also provided the producers with some pictures of Rutland around 1886. The program should be aired later this year. It is to be hoped that some of the old photographs of Rutland will make it into the show.

## LOYALTY DAY PARADE

"We dig history" was the theme of the Society float. Participants "Mo" Tucker, Tom Carpenter and Paul Crossman provided a little "tongue in cheek" humor about Society research. Joel Davidson provided the vehicle.

**IF YOU HAVE AN  
"02" ON YOUR  
MAILING LABEL  
IT'S TIME TO RENEW**

**THE FACILITIES OF THE  
RUTLAND HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY ARE OPEN ON:  
MONDAYS 6 - 9 PM  
SATURDAYS 1 - 4 PM**