

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT

VOL. 10 NO. 3 RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2003

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FALL PROGRAMS

The Program Committee has announced the following programs for Fall Season of 2003.

WED 1 OCT - 7:00 p.m. "The John Phair Murder Case, 1874".

Helen and Jim Davidson will present the day-by-day newspaper reports from the *Rutland Daily Globe* regarding the evidence, suspects and progress in solving the crime. The audience will receive a photocopy of the story to which to refer. At the end of the program the audience will be asked to act as a jury to discuss and judge the guilt or innocence of John Phair. This program is an audience participation program and has some interesting and intriguing twists.

WED 15 OCT - "A History of Early Automobiles, Garages, Dealers and Operators in Rutland" (See Annual Business Meeting on this page for details.)

WED 29 OCT - 7:00 p.m. "An Axe to Grind: Lizzie Borden Revisited".

One of the most infamous crimes of late 19th Century America was the grisly double homicide of wealthy banker Andrew Jackson Borden and his wife Abby in their modest Fall River, Massachusetts home. Within days of the murder Andrew's daughter Lizzie emerged as the prime suspect. The ensuing trial, ten months later, was truly a cause celebre and reported in great detail in American newspapers including those in Rutland.

Michael Dwyer, the presenter, grew up in Fall River just a block away from Lizzie's home where she moved after the murders and lived the rest of her life. His walk home from school took Michael past the Borden graves.

His analysis of the Borden murders will not only reflect a local perspective but will also reveal how this news story was portrayed in the Rutland newspapers.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting of the Rutland Historical Society will be held on Wednesday, 15 October 2003 at the Society at 96 Center Street, Rutland. The business meeting, which includes reports and the election of officers and directors, will start at 7:00 p.m.

After the business meeting, at approximately 7:30 p.m., Lloyd Davis will present "A History of Early Automobiles, Garages, Dealers and Operators in Rutland". The program will include information and photos relating to early Rutland owners, operators and the garages that serviced and sold the autos.

SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS NOMINATED

Pres. Dorothy Whitford
V.P. Michael Dwyer
Sec. Jacob Sherman
Treas. Thomas Carpenter

Dir. (2 yrs) Robert Cassidy
Dir. (2 yrs) Helen Davidson
Dir. (2 yrs) Robert Perkins

Continuing Directors are:
Carmine Pacca, Karen Sanborn and
Morris Tucker.

**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 # 6 - Morris Tucker narrates a series of still photos which sample the items and activities that can be found at the Farm Museum at the Vermont State Fair in Rutland. [This program was rerun during the month of August]

Episode # 48 - "The Health of the City" continues with a second program that focuses on the impact of the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 on the City of Rutland. In October of 1918, perhaps the single most deadly month in America's history, there were over 700 cases of influenza in Rutland. This program highlights the stories of families who were impacted by this health crisis.

OUTREACH

On 21 JUL Jim Davidson made a presentation at the Godnick Center to a small group of Seniors. His topic was "An Overview of Rutland's History". The program was well-received and it is expected that the Society will be invited to present other talks on more specific topics of Rutland's history.

On 7 AUG Jim Davidson presented his story of the Frank T. Hopkins horse race from Galveston, Texas to Rutland, Vermont in 1886 for the residents of Linden Terrace. This was, of course, the great race that never happened. Although fantasy, the tall tales of Hopkins make a fascinating story.

On 10 SEP Jim and Helen Davidson represented the Society at the 2nd Annual Senior Exhibit and Picnic at the Godnick Center. The Society promoted its various publications and membership at the exhibit. This year the Society also promoted the use of the ELMO, the visual presenter that allows for the easy transfer of all kinds of images to videotape at a very high resolution. Numerous demonstrations of this equipment were very well received. Most people had no idea that such equipment was available locally and most of all that it could be used without a fee. The Society also offered showings of two videotapes from the "Historically Speaking" series: "David Sawyer's World" and "The Flood of 1927".

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

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

The Rutland Historical Society, which occupies the old Nickwackett Fire House, continues to be a place of great activity. Archival and research materials are constantly received and added to the collections by volunteers who meet three times weekly to process and catalog these gifts. The Society's materials are available for public use on Mondays from 6 to 9 p.m. and Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m. Special arrangements for other societies, groups or out-of-town visitors to visit the Society can be made upon request.

During the past year the Society has hosted special programs for school and community groups at both the Society and other locations. School groups are provided a special program and a walking tour. Society volunteers also make visits to Rutland area schools upon request. The Society presented a new ethnic history series for the residents of Eden Park. This was in addition to the regular monthly music programs that the Society has been offering for the past six years. For the past three years Jim and Helen Davidson have presented programs for Elder Hostel sponsored by the Old Homestead in Castleton. These programs consisted of a mock jury trial based on "Rutland's Murder Mystery - 1874" and a program on "Made In Vermont". The latter program focuses on well-known people who were born in the Rutland area. On Valentine's Day the Society provided an evening of recorded dance music for the residents of The Meadows and The Gables. Two master gardeners prepared a program on Victorian Rutland plantings by consulting the Society's photo collection for examples for their slide show. A listing of over 500 names, taken from studio negatives of family portraits that the Society had received, was published in a local weekly newspaper. The Society has made arrangements to have print copies from selected negatives made for interested parties. Michael Dwyer is directing an ongoing Italian Immigration Project that will develop a history of Italian immigration to the original town of Rutland in the early 20th Century. Dorothy Whitford is chairing a Cemetery project that will offer an opportunity to repair stones in local cemeteries. All interested parties are welcome to participate in these projects. The Society has also been an active participant in the Rutland Area Physical Activity Coalition.

During the past year the Society purchased an ELMO. ELMO is a piece of equipment that enables the user to transfer still photos, negatives and other images onto videotape. Volunteers will show how it is used. It is available for use by the public without fee. Central air conditioning was installed on the first and second floors of the Society. This was made possible by donations from Society members and monies set aside in the Society's capital improvement fund.

The majority of folks who visit the Society are working on family history. They offer a significant but rewarding challenge. The Fall 2002 programs focussed on three hands-on programs for family researchers. Each program was tailored by presenter Michael Dwyer to meet the needs of the participants. The programs were: "How To Get Started On a Family Genealogy: Methods and Sources", "How To Find 19th Century Immigrant Ancestors" and "How To Find 20th Century Ancestors". Spring programs included a workshop for the general public on the use of the ELMO which was presented by board member Karen Sanborn who is Coordinator of Media Services at Castleton State College. Michael Sherman, past director of the Vermont Historical Society, presented a program on the "Spanish Influenza in Vermont (1918-1919)". A presentation on the Korean War was made by Korean War veterans to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War armistice. Many Society members attend meetings and programs of other organizations that are relevant to Rutland's history or present day functions. Jim Davidson has finished research for the Long Riders Guild in connection with a story of a horse ride from Galveston, Texas, to Rutland, Vermont, in 1886. The ride never happened but is the basis for a film called "Hidalgo" by Touchstone Pictures and the Disney Studios which planned to portray the ride as "fact". Jim Davidson was interviewed for a program for the History Channel in connection with this research. Pictures of "old Rutland"

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have been submitted to the History Channel and may appear with the interview. A letter received from France requested information about Frank Thomas whose plane went down in France in World War II. The town of Perigny, France, is planning to erect a monument to the crew of that plane. Information was forwarded as requested.

The Society participated in the Loyalty Day and Halloween parades and also continued its participation in Rutland's First Night celebration by providing recorded music for dancing and listening in the Asa Bloomer State Office Building atrium. The monthly "Historically Spaking" series continues on Channel 15, the local public access channel and seems to have a large audience. Recent presentations in the series have included advice by Michael Dwyer for genealogical research on "Jewish Immigration to Rutland", Anna Whooley's interpretive presentation on the Irish immigrant experience, Jim Davidson's illustrated story of the flood of 1927 in the Rutland area, a discussion with Dr. Ben Thompson about the Rutland Area Physical Activity Coalition, a presentation on the geologic history of the Rutland area by Tim Grover, Associate Professor of Geology at Castleton State College, Jim Davidson's presentation on the purported horse race from Galveston, Texas, to Rutland, Vermont, in 1886 reportedly won by Frank Hopkins, an interview with Kevin Graffagnino, the new

director of the Vermont Historical Society and a program on health and disease in Rutland in 1903 by Michael Dwyer. These programs are hosted by Tom Carpenter, Jim Davidson or Dorothy Whitford, members of the Society's TV committee. The Society is now entering its fifth year of programming that can be seen on Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m.; Thursdays at 1:30 p.m.; and Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Four Newsletters and Quarterlies were published during the year. The four Quarterlies of 2002 received an Award of Excellence in Publication from the Vermont League of Local Historical Societies. "Tidbits From Then and Now" by Helen Davidson continues as a weekly column in *Sam's Good News*.

The main exhibit of "Eight Generations of Rutland's History" [1770 to 2010] and the building exhibit at the Society have become permanent exhibits. Other exhibits are rotated.

The Society's photo reproduction program continues to supply individuals and businesses with a free service in selecting appropriate photos and getting them reproduced. The reproduction costs and framing are the responsibility of the client. In the past year the Society has provided photos for The Great Outdoors and The Maples.

The Society thanks its members for their continued financial and volunteer support. Additional volunteers are always welcome to help in the increased activity of the Society. If you can help, let us know.

Helen K. Davidson, President

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Publications Committee of the Rutland Historical Society, 96 Center Street, Rutland, Vermont 05701-4023. Tel. (802) 775-2006. Jim Davidson - *Editor*

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

DUES SCHEDULE

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

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