

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT

VOL. 11 NO. 1 RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER MARCH 2004

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SPRING PROGRAMS

The Program Committee has announced the following programs for the Spring Season of 2004.

WED 7 APR - AT THE SOCIETY

"Redeeming the Integrity of the Seventh Vermont Regiment" - David Mayhew.

Mr. Mayhew's presentation will show that allegations of misconduct by the Seventh Vermont Regiment at the Battle of Baton Rouge during the Civil War were not only unfair but patently false. They were instigated by a vengeful General Benjamin F. Butler. The Seventh Regiment found themselves caught in the middle of issues involving personality conflicts, political intrigue and Butler's ego. After 140 years, Mr. Mayhew proposes to set the record straight.

This program is co-sponsored with the local Sons of Union Veterans.

WED 28 APR - AT THE NELLA GRIMM FOX ROOM OF THE RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY

"How To Use 'Heritage Quest': An Online Genealogical Resource" - Jessamyn West

The Rutland Free Library has instituted a program for free access to "Heritage Quest" for the Library's card-holding patrons. Jessamyn West of the Library's Outreach Program will explain and demonstrate how this resource can be used. This program will be held at the Nella Grimm Fox Room of the Rutland Free Library with whom the Society is co-sponsoring this program. This resource which includes access to the original manuscript U.S. Federal Census records on microfilm may be accessed by card-holding patrons of

the Library from their home computers. Folks doing a family history should not miss this program.

WED 12 MAY - AT THE SOCIETY

"Rutland On Fire: the Fires of 1868" - Jim Davidson

In 1868 Rutland was struck by a series of fires that nearly made a fire a weekly event. Arsonists were about and posed a huge challenge to the community. Nevertheless, fighting fires and searching for arsonists did have their moments of humor.

All programs are handicapped accessible and will start at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBIT CHANGES

The Exhibit Committee is preparing a new exhibit on the floral history of late 19th and early 20th Century Rutland. The exhibit will include numerous photos of flowers and plantings of this era. Many of the finer homes of Rutland had magnificent gardens and plantings around their homes. Some had their own greenhouses. A number of commercial greenhouses were sources of flowers and plantings for those who did not have their own greenhouses. This era boasted a floral style much different from that of today.

This exhibit will replace the present exhibit of Native American artifacts from the Otter Valley which has been on exhibit since last year.

The "Eight Generations of Rutland's History" will be continued with the addition of numerous artifacts from the various generations.

The exhibit of portraits of Rutland men and women will also be retired.

Exhibit changes are planned to be installed by the end of April.

"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 # 51 - Tom Carpenter hosts Michael F. Dwyer in a program on "Greek Immigration To Rutland". The program examines the conditions that brought Greek families to Rutland at the close of the 19th Century. The program also profiles some of the early Greek families in Rutland including their names and occupations. There is also a brief history of the founding of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Rutland.

Episode # 52 - Jim Davidson presents a program on George Schmitt, Rutland pioneer aviator. This program is filled with old photos of Schmitt's very short career. It also includes some items from Schmitt's diary, extracts of which his brother Charles published in the "Oread", the Rutland High School magazine of the time. These diary entries were only recently discovered purely by chance. George Schmitt began flying or attempting to fly in 1910. By 1912 and 1913 he began to set records for flights. During the winter of 1912-1913 he flew numerous successful flights in the Caribbean and Central America. In September he returned to fly at the Rutland Fair where he suffered a fatal crash on 2 September 1913.

NEW SHELVING AND NEW ARRANGEMENTS

The Society has finished the assembly and installation of six new shelving units in its upper level archival storage area. Two new units will provide space for the newly acquired Rutland Municipal Court records which have nearly all been shelved. One unit is housing the Society's Special Library Collection and one unit is housing the Society's working tools. Two units are dedicated to future expansion. The addition and rearrangement of shelving units has provided the Society with a much better use of storage space and a more efficient workflow. Court records that belonged in Bellows Falls, Brattleboro and Montpelier have been moved to those local historical societies by Tom Carpenter and Jim and Helen Davidson.

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

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
Dorothy Whitford - 776-1018

Board Chairperson
Karen Sanborn - 775-6928

SPONSOR MEMBERS FOR 2003

The following either became SPONSOR members in the year 2003 or renewed their previous sponsorship. Others (*) made gifts of \$50 or more in the year 2003.

Banknorth, N.A.
 *Dorothy Billings
 Casella Waste Systems, Inc.
 Clifford Funeral Home
 M/M John P. Crowley
 Dr. Francis D'Auria
 *M/M James Davidson
 Downtown Rutland Partnership
 Hugh Duffy Coal Company, Inc
 Eleanor J. Elwert
 Factory Point National Bank
 Alvin Figiel & Joan Wing
 M/M William F. Gillam Jr.
 M/M Fred Harvie
 Heritage Family Credit Union
 Drs. Alexander Herzen & Gordon Kelly
 Holiday Inn of Rutland
 Initial Ideas

Irving Oil Corporation
 M/M Lee Keirstead
 *Sibyl Kirby
 M/M Patricia Lancaster
 M/M Richard Lavictoire
 Virginia Lindholm
 *The Maples
 Anthony Marro
 M/M William Mather Jr.
 Merchants Bank
 Nimtz, Berryhill & Figiel
 Owner Services
 Rutland Products Inc.
 Rutland Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Sharp Offset Printing
 Smalley Contractors
 *Reiko C. Tuttle

Russell W. Irvine and Joan Wing became new Life Members of the Society in 2003.

THE TRUE STORY OF HIDALGO

The tales of the West by Frank T. Hopkins have been embodied with the "imprimatur" of "true story" by the new Disney Studios movie "Hidalgo". Jim Davidson of the Society was involved in thorough research that proved that the great Galveston, Texas, to Rutland, Vermont, endurance horse race in 1886 never happened. From this foundation, Hopkins went on to star in the Buffalo Bill wild west show which is also totally lacking in evidence. From his tour with the show in Europe, he entered the great Arabian Desert race of 3,000 miles on Hidalgo, from whom the movie gets its name. Again, there is no evidence that such a race ever occurred.

Jim Davidson was invited to appear briefly on the History Channel production of "The True Story of Hidalgo" which aired on 4 March 2004. Viewers would also notice an 1880s view of Rutland and a pan of the *Rutland Herald* of the week that Hopkins supposedly arrived in Rutland. There is no evidence of him or the race.

The story and the challenge to its historical veracity has led to a number of phone interviews by the *Boston Herald*, the *Boston Globe* and others. As Jim likes to put it, "Enjoy the movie but just don't call it history." Jim has also made a number of presentations on the Texas to Rutland horse race. On 2 March he addressed the Ludlow Rotary Club on Hopkins and his tales.

LEAGUE OF LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES 51st ANNUAL MEETING

The League of Local Historical Societies will hold its 51st annual meeting at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont, on Friday 21 May from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The theme of the meeting is "A Patchwork of Ideas". Historian H. Nicholas Muller III will address the group on "The Importance of Local History". The afternoon will feature a number of hands-on workshops. Contact the Society for further details later in April.

FIRST NIGHT

At the First Night celebration on New Year's Eve the Society provided recorded music at the headquarters of the program in the Asa Bloomer Building. The program provided music from the Twenties, the Big Band Era, Rock 'n' Roll, a Latin segment, and some of the New Swing from the 1990's. This is the fifth year that the Society has been a part of the First Night entertainment. The Society provided music for listening and dancing from 5 pm to 10:15 pm. The music was well received by the public. This musical tribute to the coming New Year through historical music is fast becoming a tradition at Rutland's First Night celebration.

DANCE AT THE MEADOWS/GABLES

On Friday, 13 February, the Society provided an evening of recorded dance music for the residents of The Meadows and The Gables for their Valentine's celebration. This is the second year that the Society has provided the music program which featured music for the 1950s and the 1960s. Over 60 people enjoyed conversation, dancing and an excellent buffet.

LOYALTY DAY PARADE

The 41st Annual Loyalty Day Parade will be held in Rutland on Sunday, 2 May. As always, the parade will kick-off at 2:00 p.m. As usual, the Society is making plans to participate.

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*

SOCIETY OUTREACH

Tom Carpenter presented a program on "Early Banking in Rutland" to the newly formed West Rutland Historical Society on Monday 19 January at the West Rutland Town Hall. His presentation included a video from the "Historically Speaking" series. He also brought some examples of money and answered questions after the program. On 5 February, Jim Davidson was invited to be a guest on "Coffee Break," a show of WVNR radio in Poultney. The topic of the show was "Genealogy". On 12 March, Jim Davidson made a brief presentation to the residents of "The Gables" on the activities of the Society followed by a viewing of "David Sawyer's World: Rutland 1898" from the "Historically Speaking" series. Jim still finds time to offer a monthly program of music from the past for the residents of Eden Park.

PARAMOUNT ARCHIVES

The Paramount board of directors have decided to transfer their archives to the Rutland Historical Society. The Society is pleased to integrate these records with its other theatre records to provide the public a one-stop location for the history of the Playhouse and its successor, the Paramount Center. Most of the newly acquired material is from the 1990s.

DUES FOR 2004 ARE PAYABLE NOW. CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL FOR YEAR FOR WHICH ALREADY PAID.

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

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