

# **NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT**

**VOL. 11 NO. 2 RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

**JUNE 2004**

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## **SOCIETY WINS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR "HISTORICALLY SPEAKING" CABLE TV SERIES**

On 21 May 2004 the Vermont League of Local Historical Societies at its annual meeting presented the Rutland Historical Society an Award of Excellence in Educational Outreach for its "Historically Speaking" cable television program series.

In June 1999 the Rutland Historical Society began producing an ongoing series of monthly 30-minute cable television programs called "Historically Speaking". The programs included interviews and historical pictorial material in a flexible video magazine format and were cablecast on Rutland's cable channel 15.

The programs are shown approximately 12 times during each month on a regular schedule of every Wednesday at 4:00 pm; every Thursday at 1:30 pm and every Friday at 7:30 pm. "Historically Speaking" follows the Rutland Chamber of Commerce program. The Chamber is a Sponsor member of the Rutland Historical Society and usually gives a "Stay tuned for Historically Speaking" lead into the Society program.

The Rutland Historical Society submitted its application not so much for the honor of an award as to share what the Society believes is a model that can be emulated by most historical societies in cooperation with the public access station in their area. Currently it is believed that the Rutland Historical Society is the only local society in Vermont that offers a regularly scheduled series on cable access.

The television age has greatly changed how Americans gain their information and entertainment. As attendance at live public programming decreased it became important to find alternative ways to reach the public. As the Society began its cable programs, it received local comments on the street and in the supermarket such as "Saw you on TV" or "I liked your show about \_\_\_\_". It was then clear that the Society had an audience. During a survey of viewers last year, the cable access station found that "Historically Speaking" was the most popular of Channel 15's programs.

An advantage of the television medium is that it is offered 12 times, not once. The Society has rarely done reruns, but certainly it could. The Society archives master tapes of all its shows. An old show is often used for a school group or a senior citizen group. The Society is now in the process of making copies of selected shows available to the Rutland Free Library which in turn will provide them to the public on free loan. Programs can also be viewed at the Society upon request during its public hours.

What began as a project for a very specific educational outreach, has become a very successful ongoing venture that has now found additional outlets for its content.

**HAVE YOU PAID  
YOUR 2004 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 # 53 - Michael F. Dwyer interviews Cynthia Bittinger, Executive Director of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation. Although the political background of Calvin Coolidge was in Massachusetts, the values developed in his youth in Plymouth, Vermont, always influenced his life. The interview highlights some of the myths of Coolidge's life. He was not so silent as his speeches attest. He also had a good sense of humor. Ms. Bittinger also talks about Grace Goodhue Coolidge, Calvin's wife and Vermont's only first lady. Ms. Bittinger is currently writing a biography of Mrs. Coolidge.

Episode # 54 - Jim Davidson interviews Roger Bailey, coordinator of Vermont History Expo 2004's co-operative Mining and Quarrying Exhibit. Over 20 local societies have agreed to focus their exhibits this year on the extractive industry in their town or city. This aspect of Vermont's history as a mining state certainly challenges the stereotypical view of Vermont. The program also includes a five minute video clip from the 2003 Vermont History Expo and a brief overview of other events to be seen at the 2004 Vermont History Expo. There is a brief mention about the exhibit of the Rutland Historical Society.

## ELEANOR J. ELWERT

On 31 May Eleanor J. Elwert was laid to rest. A number of Society members attended the wake and funeral. Eleanor was the seventh president of the Society, serving from 1984-1987 and again from 1990-1993. She was a member of the Society from its beginning in 1969 and, with her husband Fred, served actively in collecting and processing the early collections of the Society. Eleanor also chaired the building committee responsible for the refurbishing of the Nickwackett Fire Station into the home of the Rutland Historical Society.

The Society has notified the Elwert family that it plans to establish an annual prize essay contest to be called "The Fred and Eleanor Elwert Prize Essay Contest". Details regarding the contest will be developed shortly.

## 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

## VISITS TO THE SOCIETY

The Society was open during the noon hour on 1 April for participants attending the Vermont History Expo 2004 workshops which were held at the Fellowship Hall of Grace Congregational United Church of Christ in Rutland.

On 27 April the Twilight Homemakers Club held their April meeting at the Society. Jim Davidson provided a guided tour of the new exhibit entitled "Rutland Homes and Gardens". (See page 4).

From 29 April to 20 May ten school classes from the sixth grade at the Rutland Intermediate School visited the Society in groups of two classes. Each group took a walking tour of Rutland's historic districts. Jim Davidson, Carmine Pacca or Robert Perkins served as guides for these tours which emphasized the movement of Rutland's center from uptown to downtown as a result of the coming of the railroad. The walk also noted the historic types of architecture along the route. An exhibit presentation and a video program were also provided for each group by Helen or Jim Davidson. A total of over 200 students passed through the Society during these visits.

On Sunday afternoon 23 May Jim Davidson of the Society hosted a summer course from Johnson State College's external degree program. The students spent the afternoon in an overview and a sampling of Vermont History resources that are available at the Rutland Historical Society and at other historical societies in Vermont.

## HAVE HISTORY, WILL TRAVEL

On 1 April, Jim Davidson and Morris Tucker visited a Rutland High School literature class that was reading "The Day No Pigs Would Die". The story involves a visit to the Rutland Fair by some of the characters in the story which revolves around a pet pig. Jim and Morris talked with the students about the Fair and concluded by showing a gambrel stick to the class. The students were unable to identify the stick which was used in slaughtering animals such as pigs.

On 2 April Jim Davidson was a guest on the WJJR morning radio show where he briefly talked about the Frank Hopkins hoax and the movie "Hidalgo". Hopkins supposedly won an 1800 mile race from Texas to Rutland in 1886. However, the race never happened.

On 17 May Jim Davidson presented a program entitled "Who Are These Vermonters, Anyway" for the Elder Hostel program of the Castleton Old Homestead. The program made use of Vermont census data from the 2000 Federal census to disclose some surprising facts about Vermonters today.

On 21 May President Dorothy Whitford and Helen and Jim Davidson attended the Vermont Local Historical Societies Annual Meeting at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont. The Society received an Award of Excellence for Educational Outreach through its over 50 episodes of "Historically Speaking" produced over the last four years. (see page 1). During the afternoon there were a series of workshops which the Society members attended. The Society also made a brief presentation of how it used the ELMO to develop many of its video programs. There were a number of societies interested in the potential of this piece of equipment.

On 1 June Jim Davidson made a presentation for the Society at the monthly meeting of the Rutland County Retired Teachers Association. Jim talked briefly about the Society's activities and showed the "Historically Speaking" program on "David Sawyer's World: Rutland in 1898". This program has been used for school visitors and has been quite popular with both teachers and students.

## EDEN PARK

On 23 April Director Helen Davidson and Curator Jim Davidson attended the Eden Park thank you program. Jim has provided a monthly music hour from the Society for the last seven years. Residents have expressed great enjoyment with the lively music from their "memory times." Musical history has not only entertained the residents but for many it has been a wonderful therapy. When the comatose resident starts keeping time to the music, the program is all worth while.

## SOCIETY CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION TO CHANNEL 15

The Rutland Regional Community Television which operates channels 15,20 and 21 held its annual meeting on 10 May. Society members Tom Carpenter and Jim and Helen Davidson attended the meeting where Tom Carpenter presented a certificate of appreciation for RRCT's over four years of assistance to the Society in the production of "Historically Speaking" which has become a popular and award-winning show.

## RUTLAND ANTIQUE TRUCK SHOW

The 18th Rutland Antique Show will be held Sunday 1 August 2004 at the Rutland Fairgrounds. For further information call David Zsido at (802) 775-6576.

## SPRING CLEANING

Society members held a spring cleaning morning from 10 to 12 on Saturday 17 April. All windows, storm and regular, inside and out, were cleaned. Woodwork was dusted or wiped clean. The restroom floor was washed and the facilities cleaned. The first floor carpet was vacuumed. Glass in display cases was washed. It is amazing what can be accomplished in two hours when there are enough ready hands.

*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*

## 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

## CURRENT EXHIBITS

"Rutland Homes and Gardens" is a current exhibit which includes numerous photos of flowers and plantings of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. 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.

An exhibit on loan until mid-August shows the World of Mirth Carnival in miniature as it was at the Rutland Fair from the 1930s to the 1960s. Dave Knipes is the local researcher and model builder who created this seven part display. Carnival devotees and children should not miss this exhibit.

The "Eight Generations of Rutland's History" continues to be on exhibit.

## LOYALTY DAY PARADE

The Society presentation in this year's Loyalty Day Parade involved 12 marchers in varying period costumes. The "Costumes of the Past" included the Revolutionary Era, the mid-19th Century, the early 20th Century, the 1920s and 1930s and the 1950s. There were six men and six women ranging from 6 years old to the mid-70s in the Society's ranks.

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

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