

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT

VOL. 11 NO. 3 RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2004

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ANNUAL MEETING CELEBRATES 35 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year the Society celebrates its 35th year of operation. From modest beginnings it has progressed to a very active organization. It publishes an award-winning quarterly magazine which is now in its 34th year. A companion newsletter about Society activities is now in its 11th year. The Society has produced nearly 60 episodes in its monthly television series, "Historically Speaking", in the last five years. This series recently won an award of excellence. A weekly Rutland Historical Society column entitled "Tidbits from Then and Now" has passed a five year milestone in "Sam's Good News". A Society website is now in committee for planning and implementation. The Society also offers live programming for groups of all ages from kindergarten to senior citizens both at the Society and at other locations.

The Society has nearly 600 members from 32 states and the District of Columbia. Over 30 or 5% of members are Sponsor members. Another 30 or 5% of the membership are actively involved in the various activities of the Society. All of the activities of the Society are the work of volunteers. There are no administrative salaries.

As the Society celebrates and works to maintain its vitality there are challenges to be met in the next 35 years. This year's annual meeting is designed to facilitate discussion and input from both members and non-members about the future of the past. Kevin Graffagnino, new director of the Vermont Historical Society, will be the keynote speaker. His topic is

"The Future of Vermont History". He will help historical organizations to take a look at the strategies and approaches that they should consider for telling the Vermont and the local story in the 21st Century so that they can maximize their impact, appeal and audiences.

In an attempt to generate a larger and more involved audience at this year's annual meeting, the Board of Directors of the Society has planned to offer an extended evening program about the future of history in general and the future of local societies in particular at the Fellowship Hall of the Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, 8 Court Street, Rutland, Vermont on Thursday evening 21 October 2004. At 5:30 p.m. there will be light hors d'oeuvres followed by a potluck supper at 6:00 p.m. At approximately 7:00 p.m. there will be a brief annual business meeting and the election of officers and directors followed by the keynote speech by Kevin Graffagnino.

To facilitate the organization of the supper, folks are asked to respond by phone regarding their attendance and the dish that they wish to bring to Helen Davidson at 773-7525 or Pat Tucker at 773-7356 by MONDAY 18 OCTOBER 2004. Members are encouraged to make a special effort to attend the annual business meeting and to invite a non-member. The theme and activities of this year's meeting should appeal to all who have an interest in Vermont history in general and their local society's efforts in particular.

"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 # 55 - Jim Davidson hosts Michael F. Dwyer in the seventh of the series of episodes on the genealogy of ethnic groups in Rutland. This episode discusses the immigration of Swedes to the Rutland area. The program exposes the myth that most Swedes were farmers. The important role of the Lutheran Church in preserving the records of Swedish families is highlighted. The program also explains the confusing elements of Swedish names which can be daunting to the uninitiated.

Episode # 56 - Jim Davidson hosts Jessamyn West, Outreach Librarian at the Rutland Free Library, in a program on how to begin using "Heritage Quest", a web site that is available free to library card holders. This genealogical resource can be used from the comfort of your home if you hold a library card. This is one of many free services offered by the Rutland Free Library and will be of great interest to those pursuing family history research. Access to the manuscript U. S. Census records is one of the great benefits of "Heritage Quest". Check the Rutland Free Library's home page for further information.

Episode # 57 - Jim Davidson hosts Dave Knipes, local circus and carnival historian, in a program on the Rutland Fair from the 1930s to the 1960s. The program centers on the "World of Mirth Shows" at the Rutland Fair and includes numerous photos of miniatures of the complete "World of Mirth Shows" as they appeared at the Rutland Fair. These miniatures are the work of Dave Knipes.

THIS SUMMER AT THE SOCIETY

A copy of the recent Quarterly (Vol. 34 No. 2) "The Early Years of Company C 368th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve in Rutland, Vermont" has been donated to each of the 140 members of the unit as a token of appreciation for both their domestic and foreign service to community and country over the past three decades. In June the Society had a very successful booth at the Vermont History Expo. On 23 June Jim Davidson of the Society presented "How To Find Out About the

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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

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

The Society's facilities are open for public use on Mondays from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. and on Saturdays from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. New materials relating to the original Town of Rutland, the present City of Rutland and the Towns of Proctor, Rutland and West Rutland are welcomed as additions to the Society's collections. Accessioning and cataloging is accomplished by three groups of volunteers who each meet once a week. Volunteer members also assist local and out-of-town folks seeking genealogical and historical information. Special arrangements can be made for individual visitors and groups upon request.

"Historically Speaking" continues to be shown three times weekly on public television station Channel 15. This year the Society received an Award of Excellence from the Vermont League of Local Historical Societies for its cable television program series which now numbers over 50 programs. The Society will soon be making these videos available for public loan through the Rutland Free Library. Programs this year dealt with: "The Influenza Epidemic of 1918"; "Ghosts of Vermont"; "Korean War Experiences"; Greek Immigration To Rutland"; "Aviator George Schmitt"; "President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge"; "The Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge"; and "Swedish Immigration To Rutland"; "How To Use Heritage Quest"; and "The World of Mirth at the Rutland Fair".

Fall live programs at the Society included: "The John Phair Murder Case, 1874"; "A History of Early Automobiles, Garages, Dealers and Operators in Rutland" and "An Axe to Grind: Lizzie Borden Revisited". Spring programs included: "Redeeming the Integrity of the 7th Vermont Regiment"; "How to Use 'Heritage Quest', an Online Genealogical Resource (at Rutland Free Library) and "Rutland On Fire: the Fires of 1868".

Other activities included the visits of nearly 250 6th grade students from the Rutland Intermediate School to the Society. Carmine Pacca, Jim Davidson and Robert Perkins provided walking tours of Historic Rutland for these students. A video and exhibit discussion were also presented. Society members made visits to city classrooms; participated in local parades and the celebration of First Night. Society volunteers have presented programs at the Pittsford Historical Society; Linden Terrace; Eden Park; The Meadows and Gables and for the Rutland County Retired Teacher's Association this past year.

Exhibits this year included a collection of arrowheads from the Otter Valley area which was on loan; portraits of some of the leading citizens of bygone years; a floral history of 19th and 20th Century Rutland homes and gardens and the "World of Mirth Carnival" in miniature, created and loaned by Dave Knipes.

A recent addition to the Society's collection has been the Municipal Court records of Rutland from the early 1870's to the 1960's. These have been organized and are now available for research. The records contain places of birth, home addresses and are from both civil and criminal files. The Society has recently received bound volumes of the Rutland Daily Herald from 1887 to 1905. We welcome gifts of historical materials and most of all the gift of volunteer service from those who would like to become involved in an interesting and valuable public service.

Respectfully submitted, Dorothy L. Whitford, President

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History of Your House" for the Rutland Free Library at their Fox Room. In July the carpet on the stairs and main floor of the Society was cleaned. The result was wonderful. In August a representative from Antique Spectacles visited the Society to examine the Society's collection and capture some images. Check out antiquespectacles.com for some fascinating information about antique spectacles.

SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS NOMINATED

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

Dir. (2 yrs) Mary Fregosi
Dir. (2 yrs) Carmine Pacca
Dir. (2 yrs) Patty Pickett (Brogren)

Continuing Directors are:
Robert Cassidy, Helen Davidson and Robert Perkins.

Submitted by Mary Segale
Chairperson of Nominations Committee

FALL PROGRAMS

WED 6 October - "Rutland Silver" - David Perrin at the Society

THUR 21 October - "The Future of Vermont History" - Kevin Graffagnino at Fellowship Hall
(See page 1 for more details.)

WED 10 November - "History, Politics and the Schools" - Lincoln Fenn at the Society

All talks begin at 7:00 p.m.

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 |

SALE

The Society will hold a sale of a variety of materials on SATURDAY 9 OCTOBER and SUNDAY 10 OCTOBER from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Society. The sale will include picture frames with glass, a wide variety of books, magazines, LP records and what have you. Come see what we have that we no longer need but may be just what you are looking for.

FIRST ANNUAL ELWERT ESSAY CONTEST

The names of Fred and Eleanor Elwert are deeply etched in the foundation and the first 25 years of the Rutland Historical Society. To commemorate their service, the Board of Directors of the Society has established this annual essay contest. Prizes: The contest offers a 1st prize of \$100, a 2nd prize of \$50 and a 3rd prize of \$25. Eligibility: The contest is open to middle school students, grades five through eight, in any public, private or home school within the original Town of Rutland (i.e. Proctor or Rutland Town or City or West Rutland.) Topic: A notable event or person in the history of greater Rutland. Requirements: 500 to 700 words, typed or word processed, with a list of works used (bibliography). Submit before 15 MARCH 2005 to: Michael F. Dwyer, Otter Valley Union High School, 2997 Franklin Street, Brandon VT 05733.

**IMPORTANT DATE
TO REMEMBER:
MONDAY 18 OCTOBER
R.S.V.P. FOR
ANNUAL MEETING**

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