

# NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT

VOL. 4 NO. 2

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1997

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*In 1873 Solomon Jewett built an octagonal house on the northeast corner of what is now the intersection of Killington Avenue and East Street. He said that the spirits had directed him in all the details. (See Research In Progress on page 4). This photo is by courtesy of the Sheldon Museum in Middlebury.*

## POLICE STATION PROPOSAL

On 5 August 1997 the Special Aldermanic Committee of Rutland City met with the Board of Directors of the Society at Nickwackett to discuss the proposed police station being planned for the property between the Society building and the present fire station.

The Society had concerns about parking spaces, access to its bulkhead and the location of its propane tank. There was also some concern about the effect of this proposed construction on the water table.

Tom Carpenter has been appointed by the Board of Directors to represent the Society in all discussions and negotiations regarding this proposal. Tom has suggested that if the planned building could be turned, so that

the side became the front, then most of the Society's concerns might be eliminated. The architect will examine this possibility.

We will keep the membership informed of further developments.

## VIDEO PROGRAMS

The Exhibit Committee has produced a half-hour video program on the Flood of 1947 which aired numerous times in June and early July on Channel 15, the public access channel. The flood's 50th anniversary was on 3 June 1997.

The next program in preparation deals with the photographic work of Charles Hayles at the beginning of the 20th Century. A Quarterly on Charles Hayles will be issued in September. The video program should also be released in September.

## VISITS TO THE SOCIETY

Senior residents from the Meadows at East Mountain visited the Society's exhibits in June. In August an Archeology Workshop from the Chaffee Art Gallery visited the Society. Members of the Exhibit Committee provided a walking tour of Rutland and a slide program on the history of transportation in Rutland. The class also had an opportunity to view the current exhibits of the Society.

## SOCIETY BUSY

The days and evenings that the Society has been open this summer have been busy with sales of the Rutland History book and back issues of the Quarterlies. Visitors frequently seek information on their family histories and fortunately we are usually able to help. There is a great pleasure in being able to respond satisfactorily to a query.

Library and Archives Committees have been meeting regularly on Wednesday mornings and Thursday evenings, respectively, to work on processing materials that have been collected. Those interested in helping are encouraged to attend at these times.

## PAINTINGS RETURN

Paintings which have been in Colorado at the studios of St. Paul and Alyward for cleaning and restoration have all been completed and returned except for the Currier and Ives print "Firemen Racing To A Fire". This item has acid stains which Mr. St. Paul is working to remove.

The paintings completed include: Benjamin Franklin Mason paintings of Mr. and Mrs. Moses Strong, a painting of Harriet (Mead) Porter, a painting of Mrs. John Cramton, and a James Hope painting of the West Rutland marble quarry of Sheldons, Morgan and Slason. The frames of these paintings were also restored.

The Exhibit Committee will be exhibiting these items during the next year.

## CHARLES B. MEAD INFORMATION SOUGHT

The Publications Committee is seeking a picture of Charles B. Mead of West Rutland (1843-1864) who died in the Civil War in 1864. The Committee will be publishing some of his Civil War notes and know that he had his photo taken in uniform and had numerous copies made. Hopefully one of these still exists somewhere. The Committee would also like any information on local members of Company F of the 1st U.S. Sharpshooters to which Mead belonged.

## COMMITTEE CORNER

### Chairpersons

**Archives Committee**  
Alan Shelvey - 775-4168

**Artifacts Committee**  
Eleanor Elwert - 773-3417

**Building Committee**  
Morris Tucker - 773-7356

**Exhibit Committee**  
Jim Davidson - 773-7525

**Historic Preservation  
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**Library Committee**  
Ann Glagola - 775-1302

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**Membership Committee**  
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Mary Segale - 773-2326

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**Research**  
Dorothy Whitford - 773-3219

**President**  
Don Bordeau - 775-2761

**Society Historian**  
Mary Segale - 773-2326

## HUMOR FROM 1974

The Rutland Historical Society recently acquired two companion documents from 1974 which give testimony to the activities of a small group of Rutland people called the Chowder and Marching Society. Their roasting of member Aldo Merusi and his response give insight to a humorous part of Rutland's history.

### THE INVITATION

You are cordially invited to attend a solemn requiem exercise in memory of our recently departed brother, Mr. Aldo Merusi.

As you know Mr. Merusi has passed on to join his exalted associates of years gone by; the late Governor John E. Weeks, Lou Levine and Charles Percival Mott.

It is timely to honor his memory during this particular season when the earth is frozen. The caretaker of the Randolph vault has kindly consented to make Aldo available for this one evening on a no charge basis.

The service will be held in the Memorial Chapel of the Fairmont Restaurant on Monday evening February 25, 1974 at 6:00 P.M.

Holy cards for this event are \$10.00 each and I would appreciate your check by return mail.

Sincerely yours,

J. Walter Herlihy

### THE RESPONSE

THE ELYSIUM

ETERNAL ESPLANADE

MARCH 1974

Dear Terrestrial Friend,

It's nice up here. In fact, it's heavenly.

I thank you for your considerate and considerable contribution of a spadeful of earth toward my departure as the finale of the Fairmont Restaurant Memorial Chapel Service in farewell hosannahs to me.

The moment The Magnificent One (a title of his own choice) J. Walter Herlihy tamped down with his acerbic heel the last of the loose soil was the moment I was liberated from earthly presence.

My regret is that I know that since I'm up here I shan't ever see any of you again.

Among my new associates is John E. Weeks, former Vermont governor and the only Republican so blessed. He's head harpist and when he has a sore esophagus intones in the adult cherubic choir. His beautiful falsetto voice is like Stetson C. Edmunds'.

I've been intrigued by an unoccupied celestial throne with a revolving halo over it. I understand it's to be occupied in due time by that frolicking matinee idol and romancer, that peerless maestro de capella, a kapellmeister (as it were or were not), that fun-loving, timeless tipulating, tittilating and well-known picker-upper of tabs Dan J. Healy.

A form of relaxation here, and a very popular one indeed, is throwing darts from 10 paces or closer at an effigy of John D. Carbine.

Once again I thank you for the sepulchral sendoff. Soon I'll have an audience with St. Peter.

Affectionately,

Aldo Merusi

P.S. There's no sales tax here. No shoes either!

## NEW AIR CONDITIONER

The Board of Directors authorized the purchase of a window air conditioner for the ground floor of the Society which serves as library reading room, meeting room, and exhibit space. The upstairs library and collections area had previously been air conditioned. The Building Committee purchased a unit and has installed it. Come see us some day when it's warm outside.

## RUTLAND PIX FOR THE FLICKS

The Society made pictorial material available to a summer workshop at Rutland High School. The workshop in computer animation used Rutland history themes for its projects.

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Joe Citro, a professional writer from Burlington, Vermont, is preparing a book on Vermont Spiritualists. One of these, Solomon Jewett from Weybridge, Vermont, came to Rutland in 1873 and was "directed by the spirits" to build an octagonal house at 2 East Street, which today is on the northeast corner of Killington Avenue and East Street. (See page one). Jewett's wife, Mary was a doctor. By 1890 the Jewetts appear to have left Rutland. Joe is seeking more information about Jewett's life in Rutland and what happened to his house. Joe can be reached at 217 St. Paul Street # 1, Burlington 05401 Tel. (802) 863-8751.

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

## 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
Memorial Membership			\$200.00

**RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**  
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Jim Davidson - Editor

If your label has a "96" on it, your renewal is OVERDUE.