

# NEWS FROM NICKWACKET

VOL. 8 NO. 3

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2001

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## FALL 2001 PROGRAMS

The Program Committee of the Society has announced the programs for its Fall 2001 series. This fall's programs are unique in that each program is offered by young people; the first and third by high school students and the second by a college student. The Program Committee is pleased to be able to offer such youthful talent and to make a statement that history is not just for "old folks".

All programs will be held at the Society at 96 Center Street. The schedule is as follows:

WED 10 OCT 01 - 4:30 pm

Anna Whooley will offer her interpretation of Ann Story which won the Vermont State History Day competition in 2001.

THURS 25 OCT 01 - 7:00 pm

Robert Cassidy, Castleton State College student, will present "Tales From the Covered Bridges". This program will begin after the Annual Business Meeting. The public is welcome to the complete meeting.

TUES 6 NOV 01 - 7:00 pm

"Walking in the Footsteps of Civil War Veterans" will be presented by a panel of high school students of Michael F. Dwyer from Otter Valley Union High School. This program will trace the contributions of area soldiers. It will document not only the military history but explore what it must have been like to serve so far from home. Students assumed individual veteran identities and wrote letters home in those personae. The panel will share some of these letters.

## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting of the Rutland Historical Society will be held on Thursday 25 October 2001 at the Society at 96 Center Street, Rutland, Vermont. The business meeting, which includes reports and the election of officers and directors, will start at 7:00 pm.

At approximately 7:30 pm Robert Cassidy will present "Tales From the Covered Bridges". Robert is a member of the Society and its Building and Exhibit Committees. He is also a past director. He has recently done a photographic and historical study of Vermont's covered bridges and will share the local portion of that study. The public is invited to attend the business meeting and/or the program.

## SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS NOMINATED

Pres. Helen Davidson  
V.P. Dorothy Whitford  
Sec. Jacob Sherman  
Treas. Thomas Carpenter

Dir. (2 yrs.) Robert Cassidy  
Dir. (2 yrs.) Michael Dwyer  
Dir. (2 yrs.) Angela Hinchey

Continuing Directors are:  
David Nettleton  
Karen Sanborn  
Morris Tucker.

Submitted by Mary Segale,  
Chairperson of the Personnel  
Committee

## "HISTORICALLY SPEAKING" ON CHANNEL 15 IN RUTLAND

The Society continues to produce a new program of "Historically Speaking" on Channel 15 each month. The programs can be seen every Wednesday at 4:00 pm, Thursday at 1:30 pm and Friday at 7:30 pm. Videotapes of the following episodes can be obtained from Channel 15. Call (802) 747-0151 for further information.

Episode # 25 - Jim Davidson hosts Society President Helen Davidson and Vice-President Dorothy Whitford in a discussion of the volunteer needs and opportunities at the Rutland Historical Society. Success in Society operations is generating more interaction with the public. This increase in activities requires more volunteers to meet present and future needs. This program, which appeals for additional volunteer help, details the needs of specific Society activities.

Episode # 26 - Jim Davidson hosts Dorothy Whitford of the Society and her guest, Sherwin Williams of Rutland Town. Sherwin provides an overview of growing up on a Rutland Town farm. In addition he shares locations of neighboring farms and discusses the changes in farming during the 20th Century. This program provides a wonderful, though brief, story of life at the Williams Farmstead on Route # 7 in Rutland Town.

Episode # 27 - Tom Carpenter hosts Michael F. Dwyer who offers a program on Franco-Canadian immigrants to the Rutland area. After a brief discussion of the change from French names to English names, Michael relates the periods and causes for Franco-Canadian immigration to Rutland. Anyone doing family research in French-Canadian families will find this program of immense aid.

## PLANNED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RUTLAND COOKBOOKS

Karen Sanborn, a Society director, is proposing a bibliography of Rutland cookbooks. The Society collects Rutland cookbooks as does Karen. This is a call for members and others, who may have Rutland cookbooks, to share with us the following information:

1. The title of the book(s)
2. The author, editor or compiler of the book.
3. The publisher or printer of the book.
4. The date and location of the publication.

If there are various editions, that would be nice to know also.

Karen will gather this information which we hope may then turn into a Quarterly that all may share. This is a wonderful way for you to help your Society even though you may be at a distance or unable to help in other ways.

Remember that "old" Rutland includes the Town, the City, Proctor and West Rutland. Please forward all information to: Rutland Historical Society, 96 Center Street, Rutland VT 05701 ATTN: Karen Sanborn.

## 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

**Finance Committee**  
Tom Carpenter - 773-3626

**Historic Preservation  
Committee**  
David Nettleton - 438-2689

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

**Membership Committee**  
Jim Davidson - 773-7525

**Personnel Committee**  
Mary Segale - 773-2326

**Program Committee**  
Michael F. Dwyer - 483-6993

**Publications**  
Jake Sherman - 775-2784

**Research**  
Dorothy Whitford - 773-3219

**President**  
Helen Davidson - 773-7525

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

## PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Rutland Historical Society continues to be a place of great activity. Archival and research materials are constantly received and added to the collections by volunteers who meet weekly to process and catalog these gifts. The Society's materials are available for use during the public hours on Mondays from 6 to 9 pm and Saturdays from 1 to 4 pm. Special arrangements to visit the Society can be made upon request.

During the past year the Society has hosted special programs for school and community groups both at the Society and at other locations. In May 2001 the Society made arrangements for and hosted the annual meeting of the Vermont League of Local Historical Societies. During May and June of 2001 the Society was host to 300 children who made school group visits. School groups are provided a special program and a walking tour. Society volunteers also made visits to the Rutland Intermediate School and the Rutland Area Christian School to discuss the Depression and the Home Front During World War II.

Last Fall the Society offered public programs on "An Overview of GenExchange (a free genealogical database on the internet)"; "Practical Hints and Advice on Family Research in the Rutland Area"; "Caring For and Sharing Family Photos"; and "The Hannonah Higgins Family Tree - A Case Study". Spring programs included "A History of Fern Cottage: The Home of Zulma Dorr and Her Husband William Steele"; "Hands on the Land", co-sponsored with the Castleton State College Library; "A History of Baseball", co-sponsored with the Vermont Historical Society; and "19th Century American Popular Music", sponsored by the Society with assistance from the Vermont Council on the Humanities.

The Society continues to participate in the community's two major parades, the Loyalty Day Parade and the Halloween Parade. In 2001 the Society's summer dance series moved to Saturday nights for its fourth season. The Society also continued its participation in Rutland's First Night celebration by providing a singalong program. The monthly "Historically Speaking" series continues on Channel 15, the local public access channel. The Society has entered its third year of programming that can be seen weekly on Wednesdays at 4:00 pm; Thursdays at 1:30 pm; and Fridays at 7:30 pm.

Four Newsletters and Quarterlies were published during the year. Quarterly subjects were: "When the 'Babe' Came To Rutland October 1919" by Jacob Sherman; "The Howe Scale Company: Its Time and Its People" by S. Kendall Wild; "Tales From the Caddy Shack" by John W. McDonough and "Moving the Curtis House" by Helen Davidson. "Tidbits From Then and Now" continues as a weekly series in *Sam's Good News*.

The chief exhibit this year was "Eight Generations of Rutland's History" [1770 - 2010]. The exhibit has a companion brochure identifying some of the key persons and events in Rutland's past generations whose images appear in the exhibit.

The Society's photo reproduction service 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. The Society's Board of Directors decided to donate reproduced pictures of Rutland's history and the associated frames for the newly renovated city hall in Rutland. A City Hall committee has worked with the Society to select pictures and approximately 48 framed photographs will be mounted in the hallways of the renovated building.

Increasing collections and increasing activities have created a special need for additional volunteers in most functions of the Society. We are pleased to report that from state-wide meetings that we have attended, the Rutland Historical Society is viewed as a well-organized Society and in the forefront of new initiatives among local historical societies.

The Society thanks its members and the people of the community for their continued support. With the help of additional volunteers we hope to further expand our services in the coming year.

Helen K. Davidson  
President

## SUMMER DANCE SERIES WILL BE DISCONTINUED

This year the Society completed its fourth season of nine weekly dances featuring the recorded music of the big bands. In co-operation with the Rutland City Recreation Department, the dances were held at the Godnick Center. Starting in 1998, the dance series averaged 45 people per night with one evening's attendance as high as 70. In 1999 the average dropped to 35 and in 2000 it dropped again to 25. This year the series moved from Friday to Saturday nights in the hope of attracting larger numbers. This did not happen as the average attendance for 2001 was slightly under 20.

Special efforts to attract the young generally failed to get over the cultural and generational barrier. The dances were always free in keeping with the Society's policy of free programming.

The Society started this dance program because it felt that that the music of the big bands was a cultural treasure worth preserving and sharing. Although many folks in the community agreed that the big band music was of cultural value, their attendance didn't follow. Most participants were older and each year many deceased or were no longer able to dance.

In the early 1950's the big bands of the 1940's met a similar decline. Dance halls closed as Americans now got their music from the television or the phonograph. Dancing is

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### 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

not as popular an activity as it once was and this certainly applies to the music of the big bands.

The Society has not given up on the riches and enjoyment to be found in a big band dance program but we must make priorities with our limited resources and energies. Accordingly the Society will no longer offer the summer dance program. Rather we will provide such programs at the request of community non-profit organizations that may have an audience or program for which this historic music is appropriate. The Society will ask for a modest donation in lieu of its services.

### FIRST NIGHT

The Society will provide a variety of recorded dance music from past eras for listening and dancing during the First Night celebration. Please look for details in the First Night brochure and advertising.

### HALLOWEEN PARADE

The Society will again participate in the Rutland Halloween parade. Look for our presentation.

### EXHIBITS

An exhibit of Rutland covered bridges will be offered in late October in conjunction with the annual meeting program. In December and January the Exhibit Committee will present an exhibit of historic toys from before 1940.

**IF YOU HAVE A "00" ON  
YOUR MAILING LABEL  
WE NEED YOUR DUES**

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