

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT



VOL. 20 NO. 1

THE RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2013

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND LIBRARY PUT YEARBOOKS ON THE INTERNET

In a newsletter of last year a partnership with the Rutland Free Library was announced with the first initiative a digitization of the library's Marvel Swan notebooks. Further investigation determined that this would be an overwhelming task so instead the partnership decided to digitize the Rutland area high school yearbooks. It was thought that this would offer much greater appeal to the community, thus exposing more people to the positive results of the partnership. This turned out to be the case. Announcement of the project has resulted in high interest including coverage by WCAX, PEG-TV, and the Rutland Herald over the past few months.

The first group of yearbooks is now available online through the Society's website and the next group will follow soon. Rutland High School is scheduled for completion by the end of the year. Mount St. Joseph, West Rutland, and Proctor high schools will follow.

The library has provided volunteers to do the scanning for the yearbooks as well as providing the final quality assurance check. The Society's role has been to provide the equipment and training and to compile the individual scans into a digital yearbook for each year.

It may appear to be a simple process, but it actually involves many steps with quality checks after each. After scanning, individual files are reviewed for completeness and quality. Photo software is used to bring back life to the aged pages and provide a consistent look

throughout the book. Adobe software is used to compile the individual pages into one book and to apply text recognition, making the books searchable. Then a final quality check is made. After any corrections or adjustments, the books are loaded to the internet and made available from the historical society, library, and school websites.

Thanks to all those who are giving their time: Cliff Giffin for providing training, coordinating the scanning, and putting the scans into pdf format, Doris Fahrenkopf for finding volunteers, Carolyn Ranftle for improving yearbook pages and coordinating the post-scan process, Randall Smathers for quality assurance, Doreen McCullough for uploading to the internet, and finally to all the scanners—Nancy Smith, Kitty Furman, Karlene Marro, Barbara Duprey, Donna Herrick, Susan Crowthers, and Doris Farenkopf.

Down the road the partnership will look at additional ways to combine or share resources, using the skills and expertise of both organizations.



“HISTORICALLY SPEAKING” ON CHANNEL 15 IN RUTLAND

The Society produces a new program each month. The series includes interviews and historical pictorial material in a rather flexible TV magazine format. The programs can be seen Wednesdays at 4:00 PM, Thursdays at 1:30 PM, and Fridays at 7:30 PM. DVDs of past episodes can be obtained from Rutland Regional Community Television, 1 Scale Avenue, Suite 108, Rutland, VT 05701-4460. They are \$10 for each episode. Make checks payable to RRCT. Include \$2.50 for shipping and handling. Personal pickup is available. Call (802) 747-0151 for further information. Consult the Society website (rutlandhistory.com) for a complete listing of past shows.

To watch the current or previous episode of “Historically Speaking” in streaming video on your computer: (1) go to the Society website (rutlandhistory.com), (2) click on “Historically Speaking,” and (3) click on the second paragraph which will link you to the Video On Demand Library on the PEG-TV website. In the search box at the top of the video player, type in “Historically Speaking” then click on the magnifying glass button to the right. You should get a choice of the two most recent programs.

Episode # 124 – The 2013 Calendar of the Rutland Historical Society entitled “Faces of the Past IV: A Calendar.” Jake Sherman reviews biographies of the people in this calendar. Jim Davidson hosts the program.

Episode # 125 – “Who is Frank Eugair?” is presented by Michael F. Dwyer. This is another genealogical mystery story in the manner of his recent presentation of “Who is Julia?” This story deals with a man, a different ethnic group, and some issues different from “Who is Julia?” The story is filled with all the challenges of a good mystery.

“HISTORICALLY SPEAKING” AND “MOMENTS IN HISTORY” ARCHIVES

The Society is pleased to announce that over 120 half-hour “Historically Speaking” episodes and 118 three minute episodes of “Moments in History” can now be viewed through the Society website (rutlandhistory.com). Go to “Historical Moving Images” and then select which series you wish to view. In the series just click on the number of the item you wish to view. You are cautioned to use Mozilla Firefox or VLC, which are both free downloads. Apple users should have no problems, but other browsers may give you an error message.

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

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855-8219

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Pam Johnson –
345-0603

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WEBSITE REPORT

Since the last Newsletter, two main projects have been completed. To date, each show of our “Historically Speaking” program from episode 1-122, and each of our “Moments In History” programs from September 16, 2010 to February 21, 2013 have been uploaded to Internet Archive for world-wide viewing.

Here is a brief background for those readers who may not be familiar with “Moments In History.” In September of 2010 PEG-TV’s Channel 15 began a weekly television news magazine entitled “Access.” The Rutland Historical Society was invited to provide a two or three minute historical moment for each weekly program. In cooperation with PEG – TV, the Rutland Historical Society is able to provide an archive of back moments from “Moments in History.” The current weekly “Access” News Magazine can be seen on Thursday evening at 7:30 PM, Friday morning at 10:00 AM, and Saturday afternoon at 3:30 PM. It is also available at Video on Demand.

To view our “Historically Speaking” and “Moments In History” programs you will need a compatible browser such as Mozilla Firefox (free download). Then go to our web site at www.rutlandhistory.com and select Historical Moving Images from our menu. Click on the maroon episode number to be linked to the show.

In the near future, we expect to be uploading the rest of the Rutland City Directories and all of our “Notes From The Past” programs produced by the Society and hosted by Jim Davidson. In collaboration with The Rutland Free Library, we are uploading issues of the Rutland High School Yearbook that have been scanned by volunteers at the Society. In the future, yearbooks from other local high schools will be included in this digitization project.

New and exciting changes are always occurring on our website at rutlandhistory.com so please check it frequently. You can also contact us at president@rutlandhistory.com or call us at (802) 775-2006 if you have any questions.

DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING

The Society has always felt safe from the disasters and tragedies that we so often hear about. Yet news of recent years tells us that historical societies and museums are vulnerable as well. The Danby Historical Society was swept into the river during Hurricane Irene; the American Association of State and Local Historical Societies was hit with fraud and theft of over three-quarters of a million dollars; and several state-level historical societies have experienced theft of objects and valuable papers. Even Vermont organizations including nearby galleries, historical sites, and libraries have reported theft of art works and other valuables. And every day there are fires and medical emergencies which can occur at any time and in any place. The Society has therefore decided it is time to look at its procedures, both for prevention and to guide us in the event that there is a disaster or emergency.

A committee comprised of members Bob Ranftle (Chair), Tom Carpenter, Jim Davidson, and Carolynn Ranftle was formed to develop a plan to address such situations.

Initial efforts focused on identifying the real risks that the Society might encounter and what it would take to mitigate them. Those identified were: 1) building security and safety for the materials it houses, the people who maintain and visit it, and the building itself, 2) information technology response and recovery, 3) protection of valuable material including theft protection, and 4) preservation of historical materials at risk because of age.

The first priority, building safety, will include installing carbon monoxide alarms (already completed), testing of water and heat alarm systems, reviewing and documenting building emergency exit procedures, identifying building system components, and confirming medical and other emergency procedures.

Next to be tackled will be Information Technology Response and Recovery. More and more of our information is being computerized and a computer failure could mean the loss of not only valuable information but the loss of months or years of hard work. Proper planning can prevent this type of mishap.

Value can be defined as historic, monetary, or both. Protection of valuable items first requires their identification. This is a daunting task, considering the thousands of individual pieces in our collections. The first steps are to provide a means of recording the fact that an item has value and to build an awareness of the criteria for considering something to be of high historic or high monetary value. Under consideration is whether or not to provide a more secure area for such items.

Lastly, many of our artifacts and archival materials show signs of age, including deterioration and possible disintegration. We need to insure they are properly preserved and to take steps to save the information they carry.

We hope that none of the situations we've described ever happens, but if it does, proper planning will minimize losses.

PLEASE TAKE OUR SURVEY

The Society is looking into whether it would be beneficial to offer the option of online payment for membership, donations, and purchases. Please fill out the enclosed survey to help us make that decision. It can be returned via US mail, dropped off personally, scanned and attached to an email or just enter answers into an email. Email address is rutlandhistory@comcast.net. The survey is also available on our website www.rutlandhistory.com. Thank you in advance for your help.

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