

# NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT



VOL. 19 NO. 3

THE RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2012

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## ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting of the Rutland Historical Society will be held on Thursday October 25, 2012 at the Society at 96 Center Street at 7:00 pm. The meeting, with reports and the election of officers and directors, will be followed at about 7:30 pm by a presentation entitled "Vermont Civil War Battle Flags" by Don Wickman.

The public is welcome to all events of the evening. Light refreshments will be served.

## NOMINEES

Pres.	Carolynn Ranftle
V.P.	Chuck Piotrowski
Sec.	Rosemary Bradley
Trea.	Tom Carpenter
DIR. (2 yrs)	Lloyd Davis
DIR. (2 yrs)	Fred Remington
DIR. (2 yrs)	Randy Brown

Continuing Directors are George Bradley, Pam Johnson and Bill Powers.

Submitted by Mary Segale, Chairperson of the Nominations Sub-Committee.

## FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

On Tuesday evening, October 2nd, the Rutland Free Library and the Rutland Historical Society are co-sponsoring "Preserving Your History: A Gentle Introduction to Digitizing Your Photos and Documents" by Jessica Weitz. The program will be held in the Fox Room at the Rutland Free Library at 7:00 pm. There will be examples of digitized material, demonstrations of equipment, and opportunities to ask questions as you enjoy light refreshments.

On Saturday and Sunday, October 6th and 7th, the Society will hold a sale at the Society from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm each day.

On Saturday, October 27th the Society is planning to participate in the Halloween Parade.



## RECORD YOUR OWN PERSONAL HISTORY AND GUARANTEE YOUR PLACE IN RUTLAND'S HISTORY

Through techsoup.org the Society has acquired six easy to use flip video cameras for a modest fee. They have many uses including instructional, events, programs, etc. But, we also think this is a great opportunity to record video/oral histories of your experiences in Rutland, stories about Rutland people of the past, and anything related to Rutland and its history.

We would like to encourage you to sign up for a time slot when the Society is open, either during its public hours or at other times when volunteers are present. An interviewer will guide you through the process and ask questions or you can just speak extemporaneously. We will put the video on a CD for you to take home and will also store it at the Society where it will be available for future generations.

## “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 # 57 (a rerun) - 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.

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**THE FACILITIES OF THE RUTLAND  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARE OPEN ON:**

**MONDAYS 6-9 PM / SATURDAYS 1-4 PM**

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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. William Notte - Editor

## COMMITTEE CORNER

### President

Carolynn Ranftle –  
855-8219

### Board Chairperson

Clifford Giffin –  
773-3743

### Curator

Jim Davidson –  
773-7525

### Membership Secretary

Robert Perkins –  
773-0184

### Society Historian

Mary Segale –  
773-2326

### Chairpersons:

#### Collections Committee

Tom Carpenter –  
773-3626

#### Human Resources Committee

Pam Johnson –  
775-7074

#### Program Committee

Jim Davidson –  
773-7525

#### Publications Committee

Jake Sherman –  
775-2784

#### Research Committee

Rosemary Bradley –  
773-9411

#### Website Committee

Doreen McCullough –  
776-5232

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Rutland Historical Society continues its mission of preserving and sharing Rutland History. The following summarizes our many efforts and activities for the year.

To ensure that the Society is a sustainable organization, we continue with sound financial planning and are making sure that we comply with current not-for-profit governance and legal policies, and are striving for a more efficient structure. We have conducted a financial audit and are streamlining financial reporting. We were successful in obtaining grants of \$1000 each from the Vermont Community Fund, IBM, and the Green Mountain Power Co. in addition to the annual grant received from Rutland City. We have published policies on non-discrimination, ethics, copyright, and privacy and we have simplified our structure by reducing the number of standing committees.

Technology and Digitization have become the underpinning of the Society's future. In November 2011 the Society received a League of Local Historical Societies award of excellence for our digitization efforts. Major accomplishments in this area include the scanning and digitization of over 80 Rutland City Directories, 155 Quarterly publications, and West Rutland Town Reports, and the uploading of a significant number of the over 100 Historically Speaking episodes to Internet Archive, a non-profit digital library offering free universal access to books, video, and other media. We've scanned several of our photo collections including early 20 C glass plate prints and prints from later Rutland photographers. Technology upgrades included a laptop computer, a hand held scanner, and a scanner designed specifically for converting negatives and slides into digital images. This newest scanner is being used to scan hundreds of negatives, early lantern slides, glass plate negatives, and 35 mm slides, many producing images seen by us for the first time. These efforts have enabled us to fulfill a number of requests for photographs by local organizations and businesses. In 2012 we acquired compact video cameras and have begun to record oral histories of Rutland's long-time residents.

The Society's website [www.rutlandhistory.com](http://www.rutlandhistory.com) is our link to and from the public and it is the perfect venue for bringing Rutland's history to a global audience 24/7. We publish information from and about our collections, provide recommendations and links for researchers, and inform the public about our programs and what is going on at the Society. Major

content added this past year includes the remaining Quarterlies, City Directories, links to uploaded video episodes of Historically Speaking, West Rutland Town Reports, three image galleries, the William Nichols Civil War letter, and the Society's by-laws and policies. Re-organization of the website content has resulted in easier access to the information.

The Society's programs serve everyone. We held programs or provided support for programs and events for youth and school groups such as the YES program; for seniors—OSHA series and TRIAD at the Godnick Center; for local organizations—the Universalist Church, the Rutland Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Italian American Club; for area and state groups—Vermont Blind and Visually Impaired, the Chittenden, Goshen, Pittsford, and Salisbury Historical Societies, the Brandon and Pittsford Libraries, the Crown Point Association in Shoreham, tours of Hawk Hill, Lake Dunmore, and 1957 Chittenden Airplane Crash site; and for community events—the annual Sidewalk Sale, the annual blood drive, and the Halloween and Loyalty Day Parades. Society members also attended a VHS information session in Rutland, conservation testing of the Cootey Building, and informational meetings on the sale of the historic Armory building.

Our Television Presence continues with Moments in History, a 2-3 minute segment of the PEGTV Weekly Access news show which is coming up on the two year mark, with over 100 segments having been aired. On PEGTV our Historically Speaking series continues with three new episodes: "Civil War Exhibit" – at the Society, "Behind these Walls" – the inner workings of the Society, and Rutland "Dressed Up" - selections from the Society's Textile Collection. At PEGTV's annual meeting the Society presented a certificate of appreciation to the PEG-TV staff.

The Society's printed publications continue with its Quarterly (Faces of the Past Calendar III, The Vermont Marble Company Strike of 1966, The Vermont Marble Company Goes to War, and Rutland in the Civil War Part 3 – The Sharpshooters), quarterly Newsletters, and 52 weekly Tidbits From Then and Now published in Sam's Good News. In addition, the Society provided an article for the Vermont Business Journal.

A Library Partnership began early this year when the Rutland Free Library Board contacted the Society, seeking to develop an active partnership to help realize one of their strategic goals: to preserve and share Rutland's heritage. Representatives from both

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED

organizations are now meeting on a monthly basis to determine what joint projects will benefit both organizations as well as the community. Initial efforts are focused on digitization.

The Vermont History Expo in June was the culmination of several months of planning, researching, and building an exhibit on the "Vermont and Rutland Sharpshooters." The leadership and teamwork of the more than 10 volunteers who participated were rewarded with a successful exhibit and an excellent showing for the Society.

As caretaker of the Nickwackett Firehouse, the Society performs repairs and maintenance, which this year included major plumbing/furnace repairs and the purchase of a new de-humidifier. Electrical, air conditioning, and ADA compliance inspections are conducted on a regular basis. In winter, the city plows the parking lot and a Corrections Department team makes sure the walks are cleared. In the summer a volunteer maintains the small flower garden in front of the building.

In the Collections Management area the Society processed over 80 incoming donations of historical materials and made significant progress with the backlog from prior years. In addition the collections' team has organized a major new collection, reviewed, organized, and stored all large documents, maps, and photos, and lastly, has reviewed items in our secured storage units. The Collections Management software has been updated to

the latest version. To maintain and improve skills, volunteers attended the Vermont League of Local Historical Societies annual meeting and education sessions and a meeting of the Vermont Archivists.

At the Firehouse we continue to open the Society to the public twice a week with each session hosted by volunteers, and have conducted many formal and informal tours of the facility.

Requests for historical information come in through the website message board, emails, phone calls, letters, and visitors. Many of these require a significant amount of research. An estimated 250 requests are handled annually.

In closing, we thank the community for its support and ask them to join or continue their membership, to become a volunteer, and to donate historical materials relating to the municipalities that make up the original town of Rutland (Rutland City, Rutland Town, West Rutland, and Proctor).

And a special thanks to the volunteers, authors, directors, officers, and the curator, all who share their talents and freely give of their time to continue to make the Rutland Historical Society a successful organization.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Carolynn Ranftle

## SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

On Saturday, July 28th, the Red Hat ladies visited the Society. On Friday and Saturday, August 3rd and 4th, for downtown Rutland's Sidewalk Sales and Ethnicfest, the Society set up in an air-conditioned space in the Opera House where they provided Civil War display boards, Quarterly sales, a Civil War shooting game, demonstrations of the website and digital discs that were for sale. On Saturday, September 22nd, the Society manned a table at the Railroad Show at the Franklin Conference Center in the Howe Business Complex. On Thursday, September 27th, the Rutland Stamp Club visited the Society for a program.



Michael Coppinger of the Downtown Rutland Partnership receives his Sharpshooter certificate from Jim Davidson at the Historical Society's space in the Opera House during Sidewalk Sales.