

Members and guests:

Thank you for attending the 30th Annual Meeting for the Rutland Historical Society.

Author, Howard Coffin presented the *Wonderful Sharpshooters of Vermont* to a very packed firehouse on the 21st of September 2024. We will be putting a link for this presentation on our website so that it can be enjoyed later.

With that, we would like to acknowledge the City of Rutland for their assistance this past year. The Rutland City Recreational Department has kept our grounds clear and mowed. We would especially like to thank our neighbors, the Rutland City Fire Department, for the constant care and attention they give to our grounds and building throughout the year.

As a reminder, in January of 2022, we received word that the Rutland Baptist Church was closing and that an auction of goods and their history was to be sold. Tom Carpenter, Corey Kennedy, Tom Giffin, and myself attended that auction with a small wish list of items that were immensely

important to Rutland's history. Through an open public appeal and responding generous monetary donations, we were able to acquire a portrait of Reverend Hadley Proctor, the first minister of Rutland Baptist Church. The painting is thought to have been painted about 1827 by Ashel Powers here in Rutland. Restoration of this painting has been ongoing for the past 2-1/2 years.

Happily, I can reveal today that the work has been completed and the painting was returned back to us two days ago! At this time, only two people present have seen him fully restored, but we will be planning a public formal homecoming party and unveiling soon. I hope you can attend.

Our volunteers at the Nickwackett Fire Station are dedicated and amazing people. Our board and officers give up their time off to host on Saturday afternoons. I wish to personally thank every person on the team who have worked tirelessly in the background during this past year.

Our trusty Chair, Scott Kaufmann, attempts to keep us all focused and on track. Herding cats as it were. Not kidding that is a very tough job.

Our treasurer, Randy Brown and assistant, Tom Carpenter, guide us with money matters. I think that they have done an excellent job financially steering an all-volunteer, grass-roots organization such as this.

The result of the pandemic shutdown had quite an impact on the archives of the society. We are still receiving the donations from families across the country returning treasurers to help us tell Rutland's story. We are continually in the process of scanning, cataloging, and storing items.

Our Acquisitions Chair, Ron Hemenway, has spearheaded this project. Under Ron's guidance, a special vacuum was borrowed from the Vermont Historical Society for the purpose of mold spore remediation from some of the donations that had come in from that nation-wide purge.

He also championed a strategy to acquire such a vacuum of our own. Unfortunately, the equipment was far too

expensive to purchase this year until the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1 made a substantial donation and made that purchase a possibility.

This year we were able to purchase not only the industrial HEPA vacuum AND also a special book scanner with the funds from this donation. We wholeheartedly thank the VVA, Chapter 1, very much for their generosity!

Carolynn Ranftle is our digital archivist. That database is growing weekly. We acquired the Rutland Herald archives and all of the Aldo Merusi negatives in January of 2023.

Cliff Giffin, our volunteer negative scanner, at last count last week, has scanned over 23,675 negatives of never-seen photos... with only approximately another million or so to go!!

Doreen McCullough, our webmaster, tends to our expanding website, www.RutlandHistory.com . She is constantly updating all of the information, yearbooks, and pictures and she also uploads the scans to Internet Archives so that they can be shared free of charge. Yearbooks for the 2023 and 2024 are in the process of being scanned and will be

uploaded when they are completed for Rutland and Mill River High Schools. It is people who turn each page and do the scanning. The yearbook companies do not just hand over the digital files, although that would be a lot handier.

Susan Carroll keeps everything rolling. Right now, she is mastering our new book scanner. She is also our contact person. She checks our voicemail, responds to inquiries, and set up special events. She recently hosted the Rutland Class of 1964 with our original copies of Rutland Heralds and yearbooks for that special year.

We also would be lost without our in-house helpers, Laurie, Brandon, Tom, Gay, and Kathy. Many thanks to you all!

Since the pandemic began, Michael Dwyer has kept our public access PEG-TV segment of Historically Speaking alive. Michael is a fascinating presenter on many current topics. His episodes are available in our video library on our website under the “videos” tab. Historically Speaking is now loaded to episode # 208 with the latest documenting Saving Evergreen Cemetery and its revitalization.

The Society continues to serve as many inquiries as possible, and we endeavor to keep up with the overwhelming demand on social media platforms. We are available for inquiries via email, Facebook, and regular mail. Corey Kennedy attends to the Facebook page. We realize that technology is not a panacea.

We are open regularly on Saturday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m. We also set up appointments for in-person research and meetings as well as appointments for folk from all over the country and visitors from Manitoba, Canada. If you need to set up an appointment, please let us know, either by email president@rutlandhistory.com or call. Please be patient. We are sometimes overwhelmed with requests but will do our best to accommodate your needs.

Most of our guests are seeking their ancestral roots in Rutland. As such, we are a FamilySearch Affiliated Library and can access many records available only in the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City, UT.

It is extremely humbling to acknowledge that we here at the Rutland Historical Society are Time Lords of Rutland.

Going forward, at some point in the near future, we will be holding a genealogical workshop to help beginners get started on exploring Their family's journey. I have contacted the registrars of the Vermont Mayflower Society, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Sons of the Civil War, and the Ann Story DAR to bring their expertise.

We invite you to become a member of the Rutland Historical Society if you are not already, and also maybe join us as a volunteer.

Just as an aside. Rutland just had a birthday. She was chartered on Sept 7, 1761. She is now 263 years old.

We are extremely excited for 2025 and the America 250! Celebrations that commemorate the upcoming 250th birthday of our country in 2027 and also Rutland's 265th birthday!

Hope to see you some Saturday afternoon!

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara L. Giffin, President
Rutland Historical Society

