



The Time Keeper

Essex County Museum & Historical Society Newsletter

December 2008

Letter from the President

Our tenure as Co-Presidents will end as of the January 2009 Board of Director's meeting – oddly coinciding with the swan song of the Bush Administration. Hmm. That 2008 has, nevertheless, been a good year for the Museum you will see from the reports of our team members.

But first, some well-deserved accolades. Our appreciation to those with whom we have served during the past year: members of the Board and Executive Committee; our Curator, David Jett, who consistently designs and executes remarkable exhibits and gallery displays that resonate with everyone who visits; as well as Administrative Assistant, Kelly LaFollette, who cheerfully accomplishes more than her job description requires – take a look at her recent re-design of our web site. And of course, the host of other volunteers who have ever stepped up to do most everything we've needed, from serving as Docents, to running special events, producing our publications, and fixing things. Our thanks and appreciation, also, to the many who organized, directed, and participated in five major 2008 'showings of the flag': Applebee's breakfast, yard sale, Spring Gala, Rivahfest, and the Fall Gala.

We also wish to recognize the many contributions of Museum co-founder Van Van Arsdale who, after more than a decade of uniquely vital service, has resigned as Board member and Director of Docents. Well done. Van's slot has been filled by Diane Kean, whose report you will see in a bit. Rotating off the Executive Committee in January is Treasurer Reeves Pogue, whose position will be filled by Bill Croxton. Leaving the Board are Amy Griffin and Brian Penniston, while nominated for it is Kia Ware, who has done a fine job as our publicity specialist. Finally, Board member Robert LaFollette is set to become First Vice President, following Joe Johnston. Rested from a year off in the top spot, Finance Committee head Priscilla Vaughan is returning to the presidency. To you all, we appreciate your commitment, past and present.

The past year in the top job has, as they say in the 'ed biz', been a learning experience for us. We knew the Executive Committee, our management team, was extremely capable, but quickly realized they were a whole lot better than that. They are not so much cross-trained as cross-experienced, so that each member can pretty much pick up on another's area if need be. They are of the 'will do' school, and are endowed with the talent, determination and vision to make the Museum a model of its type.

While we are first and foremost a historically-oriented organization, we are totally dependant on the generosity of the community we serve, and as such, are obliged to seek funding to enable us to do what we do so well. However, with the national economy in crisis, and uncertainty – at best – looming, we are aware that our traditional sources of income may become dramatically impinged, or worse. We know that as good stewards we must continue to exercise sound judgment by planning for income short-fall now, by conducting only those activities that on-hand operational funds will cover, and by realistically assessing the pluses and minuses of fundraising. To this end, we pledge to continue exercising due vigilance in the acquisition and disbursement of the financial support we receive.

Wishing you all a **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year**,
Gordon and Anita Harrower



Season's Greetings
to all of our members
and community
friends from the staff
and volunteers of the
ECMHS!

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Museum Hours:
M, T, Th, Fr, Sat 10 am—3 pm
Sunday 2—3 pm

Membership

All of our members play a major role in supporting the Museum and Historical Society both financially and as volunteers and advocates. 2008 members have seen the benefits of membership explode! Benefits included: exciting exhibit openings with historical demonstrations and warm receptions, four quality publications, the Spring Gala at the Essex Inn and 10% discount at the gift shop. The two historical bulletins and the two newsletters are mailed each year to both current and previous year's members to allow members who pay after the first of the year to experience continuous benefits. The membership year is from January 1 until December 31. If you have not paid since 2007, you will be dropped from the membership mailing list in 2009. All museum events are open to the public except for the members' Spring Gala which is held annually at the Essex Inn in the month of May. If you are not sure of your membership status, please call 804-443-4690 and leave a message for Kelly LaFollette to call you or email her at admin@ecmhs.org Your membership dues assist in keeping the museum open, available to all, free of charge. Thank you in advance for returning the enclosed membership envelope as soon as possible. If you have family or friends in the community who are not members, or know of others who may be new to our community, please encourage them to join. Membership envelopes are always available at the Museum.

Priscilla Vaughan, Finance

Fall Gala

The first Fall Gala, held in October 2008, was attended by 95 people. Many thanks go to those who donated food and services. Special thanks to Alex Dillard for hosting the event at the Ritchie House, to the musicians from the TMUMC for the nights' entertainment, to Lewis Muse, auctioneer, to The Sycamore Restaurant, JavaJacks, Ken and Sandy Poundsberry and to the many business and private individuals who donated items for the auction. The evening netted \$6,000 to be used for operating costs at the Museum. In the Fall of 2009, the second Annual Fall Gala will be held. Be sure to look for details in the summer edition of the newsletter and in local newspapers. It will be another fun evening that you won't want to miss!

Priscilla Vaughan, Finance

The Essex Civil War Sesquicentennial

The 150th anniversary is upon us. In preparation for a 'fair, balanced and inclusive' commemoration, the 'Old Dominion', epicenter of the conflict, has created the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission.

Your Museum and Essex County have formed a local chapter to encourage your support and participation. Please call (804) 443-9900, if you have an interest, questions, stories, or family relics or artifacts.

Reeves Pogue, Chairman

Exhibit Update

We have been extremely fortunate to have some outstanding exhibits during 2008. Among them, "Homespun Treasurers: Quilts, Coverlets and Textiles", which opened with a reception that also featured live demonstrations of old-time spinning and weaving, "Carved Birds by John Brooks of Tappahannock", and "Native Wildlife of Essex", the latter soon to be enlivened by a painted naturalistic background. "Calm Before the Storm: Life in Antebellum Essex, 1800-1860" focuses on a portrait of Dr. Thomas B. W. Gray by Benjamin Trott, and "Descent from the Cross", a needlework by Lucy Y. Gray. This exhibit is further enhanced by narrative panels, plus clothing, furniture, documents, and medical items, all dating to that period. "Antique Toys and Christmas Ornaments" is a delightful potpourri loaned from the collection of Herb Collins of Green Falls, Caroline County. Take a relaxing break during this holiday season. Browse through these wonderful exhibits, then explore our Gift Shop for the perfect gift, without the stress of department store crowds.

Our permanent exhibits in the Essex Gallery are being upgraded. Detailed installation has begun on the first two sections – "Essex African American Pathways" and "Essex Leaders". The remaining exhibits will be similarly revised. This year, approximately 125 items in the ECMHS Collections, which include photographs, objects, books, and archives, have been catalogued, marked, and stored or prepared for exhibition. Additionally, we acquired shelving for library/archive storage at no cost. We look forward to an exciting 2009!

David Jett, Curator

Docents

To visitors and the general public, our docents ARE the Essex County Museum and Historical Society, and they continue to do a superb job. The Museum is very proud of the 37 docents who staff, on a regularly assigned shift, and the seven substitutes who are available when needed.

We recently held a refresher orientation to review docent duties and present an overview of what the curator, education services, and gift shop committees do.

Catherine and Maurice Carpenter, long-time Docents and supporters, have been obliged to leave us due to health issues. Our sincere best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery to Catherine.

Being a ECMHS Docent is one of the most worthwhile volunteer opportunities you can undertake for your community...and offers the added benefit of learning more of the history of Essex County. Think about making this one of your New Year's Resolutions!

Diane Kean, Docents

High Tea

If you've never been to 'High Tea' at the Ritz in London, you have the chance now! Experience the warmth and enjoyment of just such an event, with all the trimmings. Hosted by ECMHS and catered by Mimi McComb of Java Jacks fame, there will be guest speakers and a presentation on different teas and their origin. Members of the Rappahannock Colonial Heritage Society, Inc. of Fredericksburg will serve as host/hostess for each table, and entertain with period dance and song. Please join us for a step back in history. The only thing missing will be Queen Victoria herself!

When: Saturday, March 14, 2009
 Where: St. Margaret's Dining Hall
 Water Lane
 Tappahannock, VA
 Time: 12 noon-2:30 pm
 Price: \$35 p/p (age 16 & up)
 Door Prizes
 Party Attire Requested
 Advance reservation and payment required
 Checks payable to:
 ECMHS
 POB 404
 Tappahannock, VA 22560
 Please call (804) 493-4690 by March 1, 2009.

Gift Shop News

HO! HO! HO! Christmas has arrived at the gift shop! We've worked hard to add new stock for exciting shopping choices. Look for food items like soup mixes, bread and scone mixes, salsa's, a 'to-die-for' Bloody Mary Mix and gift baskets filled with goodies from the shop.

Browse our shelves for just the right gift for family and friends, especially historical toys that are perfect for stocking stuffers. Find historic books, research books, maps, historical fiction, and beautiful "coffee table" books like "Treasures of Virginia" (of which we are one!). We've added new books, some by local authors. ECMHS published two new books in 2008 by local authors:

To The Color, Compiled by Anita and Gordon Harrower

Memoirs of Ivy Wood Hunt (1874-1962), one-time resident of Southland at Bowler's Wharf.

There are so many items at terrific sale prices; you can do all of your Christmas shopping in one stop!

Gift Shop Committee

Outreach Programs

We ended the year providing educational lessons and programs to 639 students. Half of these were part of our outreach commitment to visit other locations, and half were presented in-house. Currently there are twelve lessons, all of which support SOL requirements, and are available to the various grade levels. All have associated visual aids, and most have hands-on activities. We also provide take-home packages to each teacher for classroom follow-up work.

Further, as members of the Northern Neck Tourism Council, we broaden our presence through participation in their 'Museums on the Go' educational program. We look forward to continued success in these stimulating endeavors.

Joan Moore, Director



Ginger Biscuits

You might try these Ginger Biscuits* at your teatime.

8 oz self-rising flour
 4 oz stick margarine or butter
 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
 1 level tsp ground ginger
 4 oz granulated sugar
 2 good tbsps Light Karo Syrup

Grease baking pans. Set oven to 375°F. Cut margarine (or butter) into flour, add ground ginger and bicarbonate of soda. Add sugar and warmed syrup. Mix well to a stiff consistency. With floured hands, roll into balls the size of a walnut. Place on baking pans allowing room to spread, and flatten each ball with a fork. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove from pans while hot and place on cooling racks.

*Sweet or Savoury Cookies
 (Adapted from an English recipe.)

Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

MARCH 2009

How we communicate with you:

- 1st and 3rd Quarter Historical Bulletins*
- 2nd and 4th Quarter The Timekeeper newsletter*
- May Annual Report*
- The ECMHS website

* Extra copies are always available at the Museum.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



14th-High Tea
 12 noon-2:30 pm
 St. Margaret's Dining Hall

2009 Membership Drive Begins in December

Don't forget to send your 2009 membership dues in the enclosed envelope. **Please return yours ASAP.**

Check out our new look on the web!
www.ecmhs.org



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