

The Time Keeper

Essex County Museum & Historical Society Newsletter

June 2009

Letter from the President

Can you believe that it is already June! 2009 is proving to be another exciting year for the museum and historical society. Please always save and post the events section somewhere you can see it for planning. Our events are rarely duplicated and each one is a first class opportunity. I am always amazed by the accomplishments of our volunteers. They are the life line of the organization. The docents welcome the visitors daily. The door would not be opened without the docent pool. The board members not only organize and chair the committees but they are the chefs, set up crews, greeters but on occasion tend the bar. However, there are many challenges facing the board in 2009.

- Maintaining the volunteer base of docents who commit 2.5 hours monthly to open the museum and welcome visitors.
- Improving partnering efforts with county businesses and raising community awareness of the positive impact and existence of the county's history museum.
- Raising the funds necessary to maintain the current level of museum operations and support to the community.
- Effectively responding to the ever increasing requests for information and research from website users.

One of our greatest opportunities in 2009 is to effectively manage the budget, maintain the museum's and historical society's current level of programs and move forward responsibly.

Areas Targeted for Cost Savings in 2009

- Publications/ mailing to be reduced by looking for opportunities to use e-mail and website availability for publications. Those without internet resources or who stipulate "no change" will continue to receive communications as they are currently provided.
- The 2009 Finance Committee has put in place a cash flow management procedure.
- Grant writing will target underwriting opportunities to replace funds allocated for programs, exhibits, publications, UV protection and humidity control systems.
- All events will be self sustaining in that operating funds will not be used to fund such events (galas, historic tours, high teas, etc.) ***The entire cost of the Spring Gala was covered by a dollar-to-dollar challenge match from one of our members to the members of the Board! A Board member stepped up to the plate and doubled the challenge!!***

Each article contained within gives you the news and shares the excitement. I encourage all of you to become more active, visit the museum, attend the events, shop the gift shop, and browse the many new books. **GET EXCITED!**

Priscilla Vaughan, President

*Join Us
on a Bus Trip to
St. Michaels, Maryland
for a fun-filled day
on the Bay!*

- Visit the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and take advantage of the Museum Store group discounts
- Enjoy the Annual Chesapeake Folk Festival
- Take a boat tour
- Feast on outstanding regional cooking
- See Bay life demonstrations
- Shop for local crafts
- Explore a Chesapeake Bay Lighthouse
- Get a taste of life on the Chesapeake Bay workboats

See page 5 for more details.

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Museum Hours:
M, T, Th, Fr, Sat 10 am—3 pm
Sunday 1—3 pm

Annual Fund Drive Volume IS Important

On March 30th, 500 annual fund drive brochures were mailed to all current and prospective museum supporters. The 2008 drive raised \$6,800 donated by thirty eight (38) people. This significant amount donated by those few people went to work immediately to support the 2008 operating budget. The response last year came from 7.6 % of those who received last year's mailing. The appeal this year stresses the importance of volume. Our goal is to increase the percent of folks who respond. That increase, along with the continued support of those generous 38, will help us reach the goal of \$10,000. Economic times are changing. Choices are hard, but the dollars given to support preservation and education of the heritage of Essex County are a high return investment for future generations. To date we have raised \$2,954 and 33 people have responded. Of those 33 people, 23 are new to the list! If you did not receive the appeal letter in the mail, you can pick one up at the museum or mail your donation to the ECMHS, PO Box 404, Tappahannock, VA 22560. Now you can contribute on line at www.essexmuseum.org by clicking on the donations page. Please note on your check "Annual Fund Drive". Thank you in advance for all that you do to support the museum.

2009 Spring Gala and Member Meeting

This was a great event. Approximately 90 members and guests enjoyed an evening at the Essex Inn visiting with old and new friends. Katie Magruder and Kathy Paulette provided piano music throughout the evening. The 2008 annual report was presented covering financial and strategic plan highlights. Copies of this report are available at the museum and the report will also be online at the website, www.essexmuseum.org. This is an annual event and is always held the first Friday in May at the Essex Inn. Next year, please don't miss it!



Charles Willard Hoskins Warner Recipient of the 2009 Annual Historic Preservation Award



The Annual Historic Preservation Award is presented to someone who has made significant contributions to forwarding the vision of the ECMHS to "Preserve Essex County's heritage for the present and the future." As a scholar, historian, orator and chronicler, Charles Willard Hoskins Warner has been a lifelong contributor in supporting this goal. His many accomplishments include: Charter Member of the Essex County Historical Society, 20 years as editor of its publications, Editor/Chairman of the Northern Neck Historical Society's Publishing Committee, provided primary leadership in achieving Historic District designation for Tappahannock on the Virginia Register of Historical Places and a much recognized and respected researcher as exemplified by his finding on the Carter family. He is also the author of three noted books on early history:

Road to Revolution—Virginia's Rebels from Bacon to Jefferson, 1676-1776
Hoskins of Virginia and Related Families (to Include Hundleys/Wares/Roys
Thomas Carter II of 'Corotoman'

Mr. Warner has been and continues to be a strong advocate for the Museum and Historical Society and a generous benefactor.

Exhibit Update

Three new exhibits opened in the Essex Gallery, our main gallery, in early March. On loan from the Mary Ball Washington Museum and Library in Lancaster is a three-panel exhibit featuring the construction of the Norris Bridge across the lower Rappahannock in 1957. The second exhibit, on loan from Richmond County Museum in Warsaw, with additional objects from our collections, features the Downing Bridge at Tappahannock, which opened in 1927. Also, in our Community Collector's Case is an exhibit on the Essex Courthouse with an oil painting of the courthouse and clerk's office by local artist Don Johnson and photographs and post cards from our collections.

We are excited about being accepted into the 2009 Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) sponsored by Heritage Preservation, the National Institute for Conservation in Washington D.C. This means that we have been awarded \$7,190.00 to hire a professional conservator to assess the collections and a preservation architect to assess our museum building. The assessors have been

hired and are scheduled to visit the museum later this year. The reports they provide will be crucial in determining how we will proceed in both short term and long term efforts to plan and implement improvements in the preservation of our collections and our 1941 structure. Other institutions who have received the CAP assessment tell us it has been a great tool for them in receiving grants for improving collections care and facilities.

Several donations of interest have been accessioned during the first quarter, including an 1857, engraved, hand-colored nautical chart of the Rappahannock River from Occupacia Creek to Deep Creek; a seven piece set of American walnut Renaissance Revival furniture, ca. 1875, from Monument Place Hotel, formerly on Prince Street, Tappahannock; and a copy of the U.S. Post Office Commission document of former slave, Robert Henry Cauthorn of Ozeana, Essex County, along with his picture and biographical information. The Cauthorn items, as well as the nautical chart have been framed and are on display in our research room.

David Jett, Curator

Docents

Due to the change in the schedule of openings, the Sunday Docents have all graciously agreed to take either one of the Saturday shifts or one other shift during the week. (what changes...why?)

We encourage our members to participate in this most important role. If you are interested in serving as a Docent, please contact Diane Kean. The basic commitment for a shift is 2 ½ hours per month. The shift is always the same day and time, i.e., the first Saturday, second shift (12:30pm to 3pm). If a conflict with shift date/time arises, Docents can contact other Docents to trade shifts. If that is not successful, there is a list of substitutes who have indicated they are willing to cover an occasional shift but are not interested in a regular shift.

All Docents receive an orientation from the Director prior to assuming their responsibilities. Orientation includes written information and instruction and a summary of duties.

Docents are also provided a "Check Sheet" to remind them to sign in, check the supplies in the bathrooms, check to ensure everything in the museum is in its place, etc.

The Docent Manual kept at the Docent station, contains the current calendar, a current list of Docents with mailing addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses, instructions for using the credit card

machine, a list of the members of the museum (who receive a 10% discount in the museum store), procedures to follow if the alarm is set off, and other forms and topics they may need.

The Education Director maintains a notebook containing copies of the letter sent to all teachers; sign up forms to request a program and copies of the lesson plans used.

There is also a "Current Events" Notebook containing information on all programs the museum is currently sponsoring for reference in answering patron questions and inquires. For example, the flyer for an upcoming tour would be included in the notebook, along with a sheet to write the names of anyone who comes by the museum, or calls, to reserve tickets.

Docents are encouraged to use their time at the museum to familiarize themselves with the displays throughout the galleries, and the merchandise, and books available in the Gift Shop.

Hopefully, you will each think of one person to talk to about the museum! You may contact me by phone: 804.443.6852, or e-mail, dianek12@verizon.net.

Diane Kean, Docents

Outreach Programs

During the first quarter of 2009, educational programs have been presented to two schools, one of which, Richmond County Elementary, was part of our alliance with the Northern Neck Tourism Council and their "Museums on the Go" activity. Total year-to-date is 642 students. Cumulatively, since August 2007, we have presented programs to 2,194 students! Aylett Country Day School has reserved a date for a program this month.

We are one of ten museums in the Northern Neck who will be participating in a program for educators, sponsored by Rappahannock Community College. We are scheduled for Wednesday, July 29, 2009; **17 teachers have already signed up for the program, with a maximum of 22 ???.**

We have reserved space for participation in Stratford Hall's Fall Harvest Day event on Saturday, September 26, 2009. We will have items for sale and a children's activity, grinding corn. We need three people to assist. Please contact Priscilla Vaughan directly for details and to assist.

We also will be participating in Aylett Country Day School's Fall Fair on the same day. We need one person to assist. We will be doing the child's program only, grinding corn. Please contact Joan Moore, 443 0112 for details and to volunteer.

Our High Tea fundraiser held March 14, 2009 at St. Margaret's was a smashing success. Sixty-seven attendees enjoyed tea, delicious petit sandwiches, scones, and other confections. The speakers were excellent, the entertainment both interesting and hilarious, and the lovely door prizes were a hit. We made a profit of \$1018.42!!

Joan Moore, Director

Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning Committee has initiated an on-going process for long-term planning. A draft document, to be completed early this summer, will outline goals for 5, 10 and 15 years. The process is yet to be finalized, but the plan will be revisited on a regular basis by a changing group of people to ensure diverse perspectives are included. The committee currently includes: Susan Butler-Walters, Betty Jo Butler, Ron Geiger, Kevin Dolan, Gordon Harrower and Robert LaFollette.

Robert LaFollette, Chairman

Go to our web site for interesting and informative news and information about local history, educational opportunities, ongoing activities, and upcoming events. Remember...we are YOUR museum. Take advantage of all we have to offer!

www.essexmuseum.org

Finance Committee

Even without this year's economic turbulence, ECMHS is always thankful for the generosity of private citizens and businesses, as well as, our fiscal responsibility for public funding. To ensure we are always efficient stewards of the community's resources, a Finance Committee has been established for routine, detailed oversight of all financial activities. Recent cost saving measures have already been put in place to reduce mailing expenses, printing expenses and to ensure activities are self-sustaining. The committee thanks Ron Geiger and other members for their assistance and generosity in this regard. Any suggestions for streamlining our finances are always welcome. Please contact Robert LaFollette (Committee Chairman) or Billy Croxton (Treasurer) with comments and ideas.

Robert LaFollette, Chairman

Sesquicentennial Committee

Whew! It's been a dizzying three months since we last corresponded. Betsy and Neill Ware invited your humble committee into their Rappahannock River home in February to learn of the role that their family and ancestral home, Bellevue, played in the Civil War. Neill displayed unexploded projectiles and Betsy described how the various antique pieces came into their possession. We were fortunate to receive a video tape of their interview with the Steamboat Era Museum Oral History Project which we have transferred to DVD. We provided a copy to the Wares and one to David Jett for the museum archive.

Our March meeting was held in Mathews County in conjunction with their Sesquicentennial Committee, chaired by Wallace Sterling. We enjoyed an extensive tour of their historical treasures including the Sally Tompkins cottage. You may recall the name of Mrs. Tompkins from her humanitarian hospital efforts in Richmond during the war.

To effectively coordinate and, yes, compete with the professionally staffed and funded high profile committees (i.e. Fredericksburg, Richmond, Shenandoah Valley), we will need to create a regional identity. To that end we have open conversations with Gloucester, Middlesex, King William, Caroline, King and Queen, Lancaster, Richmond and Mathews counties. If you know of folks with Civil War interest in these counties please give us a call at the Museum or the Essex Inn, 443-9900.

One of the projects suitable for regional consideration is an extension of the *Civil War Trails* program down Route 17 from 301 to Gloucester Point. See their website, www.civilwartrails.org. We attended their annual meeting in Lynchburg at historic Sandusky where various luminaries from the Shenandoah Valley and Appomattox to Petersburg beseeched us to sign on. There are grants available to offset installation and marketing cost.

April concluded with the first annual Sesquicentennial Commission Signature Conference at the University of Richmond. You may have read about the event courtesy of the Richmond Times Dispatch and local media. It was webcast through the commission's site. Space limits my description here but I urge you to query the website, www.virginiacivilwar.org, where you can find the complete story. It was truly unprecedented for scholarship and intrigue.

This month we attended the Tony Horwitz lecture in Mathews. You may remember Tony from his controversial best seller *Confederates in the Attic*. He sends his regards to his fellow civil war friends in Essex County.

On May 17th, your committee was honored to assist the Museum in sponsoring tours of the stunning Camden House near Port Royal. Owners Anita and John Pratt graciously opened their home to a select number of attendees who enjoyed one of the finest examples of 19th century Italianate architecture in the East. Not only is the home immaculately restored but boasts original furniture, carpets and furnishings. Committeeman Ken Newman conducted tours of the grounds highlighting skirmishes between Union naval forces and Confederates under Stonewall Jackson in the run-up to Fredericksburg, December, 1862.

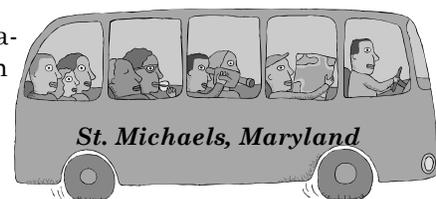
Next month we can look forward to the multi-state Commission event in Harper's Ferry. We will restock the Museum's gift shop book list with additional Civil War titles from and about Essex county people and events. Stop by, browse and take home free copies of the *Civil War Traveller* and other related publications.

Thanks and remember that we encourage you to come forward with anything you feel may help to preserve Essex County history, civil war or otherwise.

Reeves Pogue, Chairman

Jump on the bus!

Join ECMHS on a bus trip to St. Michaels, Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, and the Chesapeake Folk Festival on Saturday, July 25th. The bus will leave from the new Bank of Essex parking lot in Tappahannock at 8 a.m. The cost of the trip is \$48 per person which includes the cost of the bus rental, tip for the driver, and admission to both the Museum and the Annual Chesapeake Folk Festival held on the Museum grounds. For an additional fee, take a local narrated boat tour. Enjoy the day at your leisure, and be back at the bus for the 5 p.m. departure for Tappahannock. Contact Kevin Dolan to reserve your seat, call 804-443-8501, or send e-mail to kdolan@bankofessex.com.



Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

JULY 2009

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	31	

SEPTEMBER 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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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			

OCTOBER 2009

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	31

NOVEMBER 2009

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					

 **16th**-Qtrly. Board Meeting
25th-Bus Trip-St. Michaels,
 Maryland

 **26th**-Fall Festival at Stratford
 Hall Fall
 -Aylett Country Day
 School Fall Festival

 **9th**-ECMHS Second Annual
 Fall Gala; 5 pm-10 pm
 (details to follow later)
15th-Qtrly. Board Meeting

 **14th**-ECMHS Gift Shop
 Christmas Open House
 10 am-4 pm

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

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