

Dear CHS Membership,

November 26, 2008

Greetings and Happy Thanksgiving! This is just a short update of our activities thus far this fall along with a brief description of future activities. Hope you received our Annual Newsletter along with our 40-year history in September which recapped the year, but if you did not, please let me know and I will send one along to you.

Our presentation on September 18<sup>th</sup> at the Meadowbrook Inn, "Shannock – Three Centuries of Community", by guest speaker Mr. Sanford Neuschatz, was a great success with a crowd of almost 100 people attending. We hope to plan a follow up walking tour of this historic village with Sandy this spring to tie together with his presentation. We will keep you posted as the time draws near. Another presentation that is in the works for later in the summer will be done in collaboration with the Quonnie Historical Society, and will focus on the Stanton family history and genealogy. It will be presented by a Stanton descendent and should prove to be an extremely interesting talk about Charlestown's earlier days.

Speaking of "earlier days", we recently came upon an old scrapbook in the CHS archives as we were coming to the end of the transfer and re-cataloging project. In its old pages, we found over thirty-six documents from Charlestown's colonial days, some as old as the year 1752, ranging on up to post Civil War time. The documents were signed by such names as Cross, Babcock, Stanton, Burdick, Green, Champlin and many more, and included such transactions as death certificates, land deeds, home inventories (very interesting!), military muster, etc. We then contacted our Library Science advisor and CHS member, Elaine Robinson, and she graciously came down from Providence to examine and guide us in their immediate care until we can secure professional restoration for them. Our intention will be to display these historic documents in our future museum as a cornerstone of our local history.

One of our main winter projects for 2009 will be the research and continual learning process of exactly what transpired at Fort Ninigret during the last 400 years, as written history will tell us. With the aid of the internet we have uncovered an amazing amount of recorded history in manuscript form that sheds new light on just how pivotal this site was in not just Charlestown's history, but that of our state. Recently, one of our CHS members, Jeff Burns, came across an on-line manuscript on the history and dedication of the Fort dating back to 1884, which for some unexplained reason, is now housed at the University of Michigan. It was full of information which we did not have on file, and lends us to believe that there is much more out there!

The Farmers Market this past summer also proved to be a great success, and we were happy to join forces with the South County Conservancy and the Cross Mills Library in this endeavor. The Schoolhouse had a record-breaking number of visitors and this opened the door to a great deal of

networking amongst community members with past histories and ties to our town. Our revenue from book sales and T-shirt sales were approximately \$1,300.00. Needless to say, we will be looking forward to another season in 2009 and hope to see you all there! The sale of our Charlestown History books as well as T-shirts is on-going all year, so feel free to contact us if you would like to make a purchase. We find that some members are presenting the books as house gifts and Christmas gifts as well.

Our October/Halloween meeting was held at the District No. 2 Schoolhouse on the Cross Mills Library grounds. With no electricity or heat, it became a call back in time with lanterns (battery), and a little seasonal spirits. It proved to be one of our most enjoyable and productive meetings in our recent history. Needless to say, we have tradition for our future October meetings.

These are open to all membership and as of now are set for the third Thursday of each month, unless otherwise stated. Our next meeting will be January 15<sup>th</sup>. Please check into our website at [Charlestownri.org](http://Charlestownri.org). for further information.

A very special thank you to members Mary Taylor and Tom Tetzner for their hard work in planting new perennials at the Cross Mills Baptist Cemetery, and also for members Peter & Sandy Arnold and local merchant Simple Pleasures for their donation collectively of 50 plants, including iris, black-eyed susans, lilies, butterfly plants, and many more. We will appreciate the fruits of their labor this spring as these plants come to life to decorate this historic cemetery. Mary has also maintained the replacement of flags on the military gravestones. Kudos to you all!

There will be no December meeting, but there will be a presentation at the Cross Mills Library by Robert Grandchamp, Civil War Historian and author of "The Seventh Rhode Island Infantry in the Civil War", on December 8<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm. All interested are invited.

CHS will also be co-sponsoring an Annual Day After Thanksgiving Walk with the South County Conservancy (Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>) at the Trustom Wildlife Refuge with Naturalist, Francis Topping. The walk will be from 10:00 to 12:00 with a rain date of Saturday, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>. The refuge is a 787-acre former farm offering diverse wildlife habitat and magnificent views of Trustom Pond, the barrier beach and Atlantic Ocean. The event is free of charge – a good time to walk off some of that turkey . . .

Our quest for a home base is ever present, although a little extra patience seems to be required during this time of economic strain. We are persevering . . . . .

On a final note, please consider us for your end-of-year donations. Your tax-deductible contribution will be aiding us with a future home base and museum. As with all non-profit organizations, we are grateful for your consideration! Happy Holiday Season to you and yours!

Sincerely,

Pam Lyons, Pres. - Jean Pellam, V. Pres. - Paul Kelley, Treasurer - Sandra Puchalski, Secretary

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