



CHARLESTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*P.O. Box 100
Charlestown, Rhode Island 02813*

"To Learn, Teach and Preserve the History of the Charlestown"

June 24, 2008

Greetings to All,

As the summer begins, we have a great deal of activity going on within the society. Our most pressing priority has been the maintenance on the outside of the schoolhouse on the Cross Mills Library grounds. With many volunteers, we have completed the pressure washing, sanding, replacing of rotting boards and priming, and now hope to have the painting done by a local business, with materials supplied through our CHS Legislative Grant. We have also had a new sign made (Jackson Signs), and hope to have that in place in the next few weeks. Our sincere thanks to some of our newest members who volunteered under the "Construction" portion of the membership volunteer list, Hank Drude, Howard Hallberg and Kurt Kriksciun, as well as a good deal of our board members, Paul Kelley, Mary Taylor, Alan Angelo, Sandra Puchalski and yours truly, also Erick Taylor Custom Builders and Rob Lyons. Community spirit is alive and well.

Our ongoing renovation of the old Fort Ninigret continues to make progress. RIDEM has located a used, but functional kiosk for us and it is now standing next to the parking area. The kiosk will have a new plexi-glass panel put on it along with some minor repairs and paint. Charlotte Taylor (state archaeologist), Doug Harris (Narragansett Tribe) and the DEM recently met with Alan Angelo and myself to discuss the content of the historical panel which will be designed by a senior student of RISD. The parking area was recently resurfaced and a new fence replaced the old broken one. Our last area of concern is the old iron rail (1883) which outlines the original fort. The DEM has approved the \$5,000 expense to sandblast and repaint, after we secure two more estimates. The original estimate was submitted last fall with our grant to the state for renovation. The earliest recorded inhabitants of the fort date back to 700 AD, according to the New York University's excavations back in the 1970's, with Dutch and Portuguese trading and occupation as early as the late 1500's.

If any of you don't know already, Charlestown now has its own Farmers Market, which will be running every Friday morning at the Cross Mills Library Grounds from 9-12:00 through the summer. The South County Conservancy (Charlestown) has invited us to collaborate with them on this new venture and we will have the schoolhouse open at that time, as well as our usual Wednesday and Saturday hours throughout the summer. We are selling the History of Charlestown books, along with the great variety of local

products – produce, plants, meats, eggs, shellfish, honey and even jonny cakes and cornmeal - all from our local farmers. Please come on down and support our town - opening day this past Friday was a great success!!

Another great summer event you may want to put on your calendar is the Quonnie History Trolley Tour, which is a fundraising event sponsored by the Quonochontaug Historical Society. It will run on Tuesday, July 15th, 9:30 AM to noon, and also Friday, August 15th, 9:30 AM to noon. There is limited seating (30 persons per tour), and the cost is \$25.00. Prepaid reservations are necessary. Please call Anne Doyle for reservations and information at 322-7373.

CHS has stored its archives in the basement of the Cross Mills Library for a couple of decades now and the time has come to move them to a more accessible and cleaner location. We have temporarily transferred them to the Charlestown Police Station for review, cataloging and re-boxing throughout the summer. From there, they will be moved to the Charlestown Town Hall for safe keeping until we can finally rest them in a new home. As all good things take time, so the search and wait continues for what we hope to be a future home base for the Society. We will keep you posted and will certainly tap into our volunteer list as the opportunities present themselves. We continue to gain new members, new ideas and more community support.

A quick follow-up on our April meeting and presentation at the General Stanton Inn. Two of our guest speakers, Lorraine Arruda and Gayle Waite have completed the production of their new book on Charlestown's Historical Cemeteries, an effort that took many years of research. Jodi Lacroix (CHS Board member) also contributed as Editor. These ladies have also published books on nine other Rhode Island towns, and they are well worth adding to your library. They make a great coffee table book, or a gift for someone local. The book is available now at the Charlestown Town Hall.

CHS is also in the process of designing and printing T-shirts for sale to aid in awareness of our organization. They'll have a great look to them and we hope you'll support your society and wear them proudly!! They should be available in the next few weeks.

And last but not least, our next event is in the early planning stages for the late summer, early fall, to be held on a Saturday so that more of you can participate. We are looking to provide a tour of historic local buildings, in conjunction with the Richmond Historical Society. As the summer draws on, we will keep you posted.

Please feel free to contact us at any time, and don't forget to look us up for information on our website through the Town of Charlestown.

Sincerely,

Pam Lyons, President

Jean Pellam, Vice President

Paul Kelley, Treasurer

Sandra Puchalski, Secretary