



Middleborough Historical Association, Inc. P. O. Box 304, Middleboro, MA 02346
middleboroughhistoricalassociation.org
Nancy J. Thomas, Editor

WINE & CHEESE EVENT...

You are invited to attend a **FREE** event for **MEMBERS ONLY** at the **Museum grounds** on **Saturday, August 20th, 2016** from **4:00 to 6:00PM**.

The Museum will be open as usual from 1:00 to 4:00PM and will be open for **MEMBERS ONLY** during the hours of this special event.

Come and meet other Members and see the Museum exhibits and stroll the grounds at your leisure. We hope to see many of you come out for this special summer event!! Our Members are important to the success of the Association!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE

June is the beginning of our membership year. During the past year, there have been many enhancements to the displays at the Museum. We are continuing to repair and improve the buildings, but it is a slow process.

Your continued membership is important to the health of the Association. If you have already sent in your membership dues, we thank you! If you have not, please put this near the top of your to-do list. **We are open for the 2016 season on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00PM.** Please stop in to see us – it is YOUR Museum to enjoy!

--- *President Doug Vantran*

KRAZY DAYS

The 2016 edition of the annual Krazy Days downtown street festival will take place on **Friday, August 5th** and on **Saturday, August 6th** from **10:00AM to 5:00PM**. The action takes place on Center, Wareham, North Main and South Main Streets.

The Association will be sharing a booth with the Robbins Museum and on Saturday the Museum will be open to the public free.

New Technology at the Museum

The Association has added some new technology at the Museum. There is a touch screen computer with a variety of topics to view that is located in the media room and also a Museum alphabet scavenger hunt for children.

A new exhibit entitled “**Entertainment Through the Years**” looks at the ways people enjoyed life during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Included in this exhibit is the opportunity to hear early cylinder recordings played on an Model D Standard Edison Phonograph! What fun!!

Visitors should allow ample time to view, not only the largest collection of memorabilia from world famous local residents General and Mrs. Tom Thumb, but also six other buildings containing “real life” displays.

Model D Standard Edison Phonograph Now Working!

Following the November Annual Meeting at which Bruce Young gave a program and demonstration of several of his antique phonographs, President Doug Vantran contacted him about repairing ours, which was seized up. Here is the e-mail Mr. Young received after his "go to" repairman, Ron L'Herault, examined the machine:

"I triaged the Standard. It needs a new center bearing. As you said, the pot metal is all swollen. Fortunately the shaft still turns if forced a bit so I should be able to get it and replace the bearing without too much grief. It's not a fun job. The reproducer seems tight and I did not see cracks in the diaphragm gasket. Did I do a rebuild on that? I noticed though that it is an H and there was a 2 min. wax cylinder stuck on the mandrel (got it off in one piece). I also hear a tick in the gear train so I need to examine the small brass gears that often crack and start to slip. I don't imagine the machine gets much use so if I find a cracked gear, I may try a bit of solder to make sure it stays on and not worry about the ticking sound. It also is missing the feed screw cover. And as usual, it needs rubber feet. The feed screw cover, of course is mainly cosmetic. Omitting it will not affect operation as long as the cover is kept on when not in use to keep dust off the threads.

Bearing - \$40.00.

Cover - \$22.00.

Four new feet - \$4.00.

Labor estimate - \$40.00

That looks like a total of \$106.00 if I have to put a lot of time into removing the old bearing. They'll get a cleaned case and cleaned and relubricated motor at no charge."

Membership Meeting and Program

A Membership Meeting of the Association was held on Tuesday, May 31st, 2016 at 6:15PM in

the community room in the Middleborough Public Library.

The program was entitled "*Plymouth Corrections, Now and Then.*" The twenty members in attendance took a trip back in time to the old days of Plymouth County Corrections. They learned about the history of our county jails, some of Plymouth County's more infamous inmates and the story of the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department. The program was presented by Liisa Budge-Johnson of the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department's Guest Speakers Series. There was no charge to the Association for this very fun and informative program.

Prior to the program, a brief business meeting was conducted by President Doug Vantran. The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were accepted as presented. Doug then asked for approval for a total of "up to" \$20,000 for four items. These items were: \$6,000 for the annual insurance premium for the Museum property, \$5,000 for repair of sills, \$4,000 for painting three exterior sides of Mill House #1 and two exterior sides of Mill House #2 and \$5,000 for various "ongoing maintainance" projects. These items were approved.

Our By-Laws state that there shall be Membership Meetings in April, June, September and November. However, due to various reasons, the May 31st meeting was held in place of the April meeting and no meeting was scheduled for June.

Walking Tour of Center Street

On Sunday, May 15th, 2016 at 1:30PM, the Association held a walking tour for the public entitled "*A Walk Down Memory Lane – 75 Years of Center Street.*" The tour began at the Four Corners, continued to Pearl Street and then returned to the starting point. Many people attended despite a chilly and windy day, some could say it was a hat chasing day. Both longtime and new residents came to hear about the history of Center Street. Some of the people were surprised to hear of the many and varied businesses that thrived along the way.

Those who do remember enjoyed sharing many of the recollections they had.

Thanks to all who attended on a less than comfortable day and to the members of the Association who worked to make the walk a success. Acting as guides were Mary Cook, Judy Donahue, Dotty Thayer and Dan and Jane Thompson, while Bob and Cheri Reimels and Doug Vantran provided the research. Kate Lazarovich, Cheri Reimels and Kay Vantran provided light refreshments at the Museum at the conclusion of the Walk. Jerry Thayer acted as admission officer and collected \$140.00 in admissions, which was \$5.00 per person.

Please mark your calendars for a walk down South Main Street on Sunday, Sept. 18th, 2016. If anyone would like to be on the walk planning committee, please call Doug Vantran at 508-946-1017.

SEPTEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The next **Membership Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, October 5th, 2016 at 6:30PM** in the Carriage House at the Museum. The program will be **"The Haunted History of New England"** presented by Christopher Daley Historical Presentations.

A one-hour slide presentation will include video footage. "The presentation melds historical fact together with legend and myth to produce an interesting and fascinating new look at events that really happened and the stories of haunting that followed them.

The topics addressed will be Mercy Brown "The Vampire" of Exeter, Rhode Island; the horrors of the Lizzie Borden House in Fall River; the Nine Men's Misery in Cumberland, Rhode Island; a haunted forest in the wilds of Connecticut; the ghostly happenings at Mount Washington Hotel in New Hampshire; accused witch Giles Corey and the "Curse of Salem;" the spirits of Burial Hill in Plymouth; and evidence of ghosts at the John Alden House in Duxbury."

Mr. Daley has been lecturing all over New England for over 25 years on historical topics of interest. He is currently a history teacher in Kingston. He holds a BA and an MA from Bridgewater State University in Political Science and History. In addition, he has written several articles on varied historical topics and has completed a new book entitled *"Murder and Mayhem in Boston: Historic Crimes in the Hub."* Mr. Daley resides in Wareham with his wife, their two dogs and three cats.

The Association has booked this speaker for a fee of \$217.00, so let's make this a well-attended meeting! A brief business meeting will include the announcement of the members of this year's Nominating Committee. Light refreshments will be served.

Helping the Middleborough Public Library

The Middleborough Public Library made a request of the Association to have various issues of the *Middleboro Gazette* that were missing from their extensive collection transferred to microfilm for access for their patrons.

The following is an e-mail that President Doug Vantran received from Libby Fox, Reference/Adult Services Librarian:

"This e-mail is to confirm that the board of the Middleborough Historical Association (MHA) has approved turning over recently discovered issues of the *Middleboro Gazette* newspaper to the Middleborough Public Library for preserving on microfilm.

The papers include:

1904 -- No definitive number of issues, as these were in a brown paper bag in quarters, and you and I didn't want to disturb them to the point of unfolding every piece. The top three were all in order and were January 1, 8 and 15, so we hope the rest of the year are in there.

1903 -- 25 issues, including: May 15 and 29, June 5, 12 and 19, July 3, 10 and 31, August 7, 14, 21 and 28, September 4, 18 and 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, November 6 and December 4, 11, 18 and 25. None for January through April.

Miscellaneous -- September 21, 1872 (eight pages with a two-page insert) and March 7, 1884 (number of pages n/a).

The Library will obtain the newspapers from the MHA and ship them to Northern Micrographics (NM) in La Crosse, WI, where they will be pieced together and microfilmed. One master will be kept in WI while a second master and copy will be shipped to the Library.

The Library will cover the \$500-\$800 estimated total costs associated with this project, with the exception of one item. The MHA Board of Directors has requested that the newspapers be returned to them, adding an additional \$30 to \$50 to the original estimate prepared by NM. The MHA will cover that expense as it adds extra labor for special handling and return shipping.”

Association Finances

Some of you may wonder what the Association uses to keep the Museum afloat financially.

At the present time, the only income we can depend on each month is the miniscule interest from the regular checking account and the Money Market account. The combined interest for the two accounts for the months of January, February and May, for example, was \$2.17. We get some sporadic donations, including those in memory of former members. We sell a few items and receive admissions when the Museum is open for the season. We hold the occasional fundraiser. And of course, we receive membership dues annually. Yet, our fixed expenses are ongoing. For the months of Jan., Feb. and May, our Middleborough Gas & Electric bills totalled \$983.59, while our Verizon bills totalled \$97.70.

Meanwhile, the Association has an investment portfolio with Wells Fargo, which substantially

consists of a generous bequest we received a few years ago. A recent Director with expertise in this area spent considerable time producing a detailed analysis of this and reported that the average annual return on the existing investments is 6.12%. He set up a monthly withdrawal system based on leaving the portfolio as it has been, with room for ongoing growth, and based on a 4% withdrawal which would be \$9694.00 annually or \$800.00 monthly. This would allow for ongoing growth earnings to be reinvested – the difference between 6.12% and 4%, while the principal remains intact.

A couple of voices on the Board viewed this plan as “risky,” so the system has not been implemented. No earnings from the portfolio are received on a monthly basis. Large sums of money are withdrawn on an as-needed basis, as was voted at the Membership Meeting on May 31st.

--- Nancy J. Thomas, Editor



