

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 25, No. 1

February 2002

COMING EVENTS

March 3	Sunday	Class for new guides 12:30-2:00 Session 1	April 14	Sunday	Board meeting 1:30
March 10	Sunday	Class for new guides 12:30- 2:00 Session 2	April 15	Monday	Pot luck supper & Annual Meeting 6:30
March 17	Sunday	Board meeting 1:30	April 28 & May 25	Saturday	Antiques/Collectibles Sale 9:00-3:00
March 25	Monday	Membership meeting 7:30 Program: Cheshire Land Trust	June 8	Saturday	Strawberry Festival on Green. Antiques/Collectible Sale 9:00-3:00

The house will be open to the public on Sundays, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., through May - except for Easter Sunday, March 31. Antique & Collectible sales will take place, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., the last Saturday of each month, April - October.

COURSE TO BE OFFERED FOR GUIDES

A new, two-session course for people interested in acting as guides for the Hitchcock-Phillips house will be held from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 3, and Sunday, March 10. Board member Mary Ellen Kania, who has been updating the information sheets for each room, has volunteered to serve as instructor. Curator Edgar Johnson will assist. Those who attend will be asked to help at the regular Sunday open house from 2 to 4 p.m. about once every eight weeks, September - May, or to assist with a specially-scheduled group or school class visit.

According to Mary Ellen, this will be a wonderful opportunity for members to get acquainted with the house and the exhibits. No advance knowledge is necessary, just an interest in learning about the house and sharing it with others. The first session will include the history of the house and a detailed look at the contents of the parlor, dining room, keeping room and first floor exhibit room. The second session will include a review from the first session and then focus on the contents of the second floor rooms: the Craig bedroom, toy room, Victorian room, fabric room, and bride's room as well as the kitchen & household gadgets, gun & relic, and tool room collections.

If you are interested, please call Mary Ellen at 272-8771 by March 1. Additional people who are familiar with the contents of the house are very much needed. Please consider volunteering!

CHESHIRE LAND TRUST PROPERTIES TO BE TOPIC AT MARCH MEETING

Jeanne Chesanow, president of the Cheshire Land Trust, will be the speaker at the March membership meeting, Monday, March 25, at 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room. A short business meeting will precede her talk.

At present, the Cheshire Land Trust protects over 20 properties in Cheshire, covering well over 200 acres. Jeanne will discuss the properties and explain how they were set aside as open space which will never be built on. Some areas, such as the Fresh Meadows tract off Cook Hill Road, are open to the public. Other areas do not have public access but are regularly monitored and maintained by trust members.

ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD MONDAY, APRIL 15

Please note a change of date for the annual meeting. It will take place on Monday, April 15, not on our usual 4th Monday of the month. A pot-luck supper at 6:30 p.m. will precede the meeting. The annual election of officers and board members will take place. The nominating committee includes: Lois VanAlmKerk, chairman, Arthur

Hostage and Joan Pilarczyk. The April board meeting, regularly scheduled for the third Sunday of the month, will be held on Sunday, April 14, 1:30 p.m.

NEW VICE PRESIDENT AND TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At the February board meeting, the Board named Ron Gagliardi, a current board member, to complete the term of Vice President Clayton Crabtree, who has resigned because of ill health. The Board also welcomed two new members, Eric Anderson and Barbara Merrill. They will fill the unexpired terms (2000-2003) of Scott and Linda Libengood, who resigned with regret in November. Congratulations to all three!

THREE CHEERS FOR EDGAR AND CLAYTON !

Our heartfelt appreciation to Edgar Johnson and Clayton Crabtree for the handsome new tavern-type sign in front of the house! These two wonderful gentlemen have been continuing benefactors of the Cheshire Historical Society. At the November board meeting, there was some discussion about obtaining a new sign, but no consensus was reached. Edgar and Clayton felt that the sign should get in before the ground froze and took immediate action. Before we knew it, they made the very generous decision to donate the sign and arranged for installation early in December. Words are not adequate - but THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

SUBURBAN GARDEN CLUB TO FUND NEW PLANTING

According to Rita Giannotti, Suburban Garden Club president, the Suburban Garden Club has approved up to \$1,000 this year to add new planting to the front of the Hitchcock-Phillips House. The old shrubbery in the front was removed two years ago when the house was painted. Club members are now researching the types of plants that would be suitable and plan to present a proposal to the Historical Society Board.

JARVIS HOUSE HAS A NEW OWNER

It was a great pleasure to learn that the Bishop Jarvis House, 125 Main St., has a new owner. The prior owners had left this distinguished old house in sad condition, and it was fast becoming a major eyesore right in the middle of town. The house was built in 1799 by Bishop Abraham Jarvis, second Episcopal Bishop of Connecticut, when he moved here to be near the new Episcopal Academy. The bishop's son was enrolled at the Academy, and he was one of the first trustees.

The new owner is Michael Bowman, eldest son of George and Rita Bowman of Cheshire. Michael and his fiancée Katelyn Bailey from Massachusetts visited the Hitchcock-Phillips House the first Sunday in January to look about for ideas for their new home. They plan to be married in August and hope renovations to the house will be completed in July.

WELCOME TO MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members: Mr. & Mrs. Michael and Mary Dugan, Mr. & Mrs. John and Rosann Purtill, Mr. & Mrs. Howard & Marilyn Ray, and Mr. John Romanik, Sr.

Also the following Business & Professional members who have joined since last spring: Apple Valley Bank, Applied Software, Berry Patch, Bristol Insurance, Calcagni Associates, Casertano's Farms, Cheshire Welcome Inn, Cheshire Schools, Cheshire Academy, Richard Chevrolet (Life Member), Marc Craig, DMD, First Union Bank, Kinamor, Inc., Marbridge Retirement Center, Iris Meyer, New Haven Savings Bank, Naugatuck Savings Bank, Dr. Balazs B. Somogyi, Robert L. Sweeney, Jr., Tower Farms, and Winters & Forte.

HOUSE CAN BE RENTED FOR SPECIAL FUNCTIONS

The Democratic Women's Club is planning to hold an Ice Cream Social at Hitchcock-Phillips House on Sunday, May 5. The fee for an outside group to rent the house for a special function is \$75. This is very welcome income for the Society. We also are pleased to have another opportunity to bring new folks into our

beautiful old house. Any organization interested in renting the house should contact Curator Edgar Johnson or President Ed Kania.

PHOTOS OF KENSETT PAINTING SUBMITTED FOR CATALOGUE RAISONNE

President Ed Kania, assisted by Dorothy Drufa, has submitted information and photographs of our John Frederick Kensett oil painting for consideration by the John Frederick Kensett Catalogue Raisonnee Committee at the Babcock Galleries, 724 Fifth Ave, New York City. "Raisonnee" is a French word meaning "reasoned." A "catalogue raisonnee" is a major scholarly work which presents a complete, verified record of all existing works by a single artist. The Babcock Galleries has elected to publish such a catalog on Kensett. Their committee is headed by Dr. John Driscoll (Ph.D), director, and Huntley Eikenburg, curator.

Our painting, a small oil sketch of Niagara Falls, was given to the society in 1982 by Ms. Marian Terry. We believe it was one of the pictures originally sold in the estate auction following the artist's death. In March 1873, Kensett's executors sold more than 600 paintings in a marathon sale in New York City which continued for six nights. Our painting has the typical gold frame with a "J. F. Kensett" name plate, similar to those seen on many Kensett paintings. On the back of the stretcher, it has a handwritten note "Bought at sale No. 683" and also a printed number "904."

The Babcock's Catalog Raisonnee Committee has a number of photographs and records from the 1873 sale which will be used to validate entries for the catalog. To have our painting considered, we had to submit a detailed data sheet and two 8 x 10 inch glossy black-and-white photographs and two 4 x 5 inch color transparencies. At the suggestion of Ann Smith of the Mattatuck Museum, the photographs were taken by Randy Clark of Waterbury. He is the photographer the Mattatuck used last fall for their catalog "Images of Contentment: John Frederick Kensett and the Connecticut Shore."

We do not have any information about when the Babcock catalog will be published. According to Curator Eikenburg, it will be ready "one of these years."

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEB SITE IS UP AND RUNNING

If you have access to a computer, take a look at our new Cheshire Historical Society web site <<http://users.rcn.com/andersonel/chs.htm>>. Thanks to Eric Anderson, the site is up and almost completely running. While we realize the URL address is not exactly user-friendly, it is free!

Eric has volunteered his services as our web master and is allowing us to occupy some of the unused space on his own web site at no charge. Right now, Eric is in the process of getting our site linked to search engines and to other sites. As this is written, you already can locate our home page on Yahoo or Google by searching "Cheshire CT Historical Society". There will be even more links in the near future. Try it! It looks great!

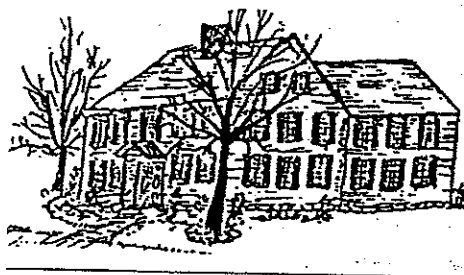
BOUTIQUE NEEDS CONTRIBUTIONS

Please don't forget the "Boutique in the Shed" when you're doing spring cleaning. We are always looking for saleable items. They don't have to be antique or collectible, but they must be saleable. Call Pat Vita at 272-3963 with questions.

REMINDER: 2002 DUES ARE PAYABLE

If you have not sent in your dues for 2002, remember that they are PAYABLE NOW! Checks should be made payable to the Cheshire Historical Society and mailed to PO Box 281, Cheshire 06410. We need everyone's support!

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NEWS**



FEBRUARY 2002

Cheshire Historical Society
P. O. Box 281
Cheshire, CT 06410

