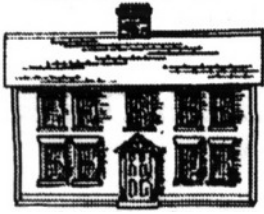


THE EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



John Hunt House

Gazette

Vol. XXIII No. 4

March 2011

President's letter

Nancy Moore, President



What was supposed to be a combination January/February issue of this Gazette has turned into a three month combination. The weather foiled attempts at a Board meeting in February and we all just dove deeper into our cocoons, waiting for a thaw. Was that a thaw for Valentine's Day week? No matter, we will rouse ourselves for March 2nd and get back to business. In the meantime, the Board has been in contact with each other, talking about long-range planning sessions, scheduling visits to other small historical museums, and considering space needs of the Hunt House to deal with the gift of Clint Sellew's sizeable Rumford collection.

We hope many of you will turn out for our March 28th potluck supper (6pm). It is a great way to visit with friends who enjoy historical events and whom you may not have seen since December. Please let us know if you have not been contacted by our telephone crew, but come anyway with your favorite dish. Maggie Dooley, our Program

Chair, has organized a discussion of the proposed Roger Williams Avenue Historic Mill District and members Dave Kelleher and Edna Anness will give a broad view of the area and its great historical significance. I'm sure that members who live in the area will want to hear about the plans and make comments.

The work continues on the fish ladder at Hunts Mills and the machinery continues to set off our very sensitive alarm system. We are glad for the everyday presence of the crew and it has been fascinating to watch Mother Nature find her way around the coffer dams, pouring water into every crevice that had been so carefully dried out. Will the spring run of herring find a new path? Stay tuned.

And finally, we welcome a new contributor to the Gazette, Susan Cady. Susan grew up in EP and has begun researching the school department. Her first article deals with music teachers at the high school and was of particular interest to me. I hope it strikes chords with you as well. (pun intended.)

See you in the Spring -

Calendar Of Events

MARCH

Sunday, March 13

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Hunt House Museum open
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Monday, March 28, 6:00 p.m.

Members' Meeting - *Public Invited*

Newman Church, Rumford

Why Create a Local Historic District?

Panel Discussion and PotLuck Dinner

APRIL

Wednesday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.

Board Meeting - *Members Welcome*

Hunt House Museum

Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Sunday, April 10

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Hunt House Museum open
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Monday, April 25

Members' Meeting - *Public Invited*

Topic and place to be announced



The Gazette

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Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI
02916-4774
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Web Site: ephist.org

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Why Create a Local Historic District?

Panel Discussion and Potluck Dinner

Members' Meeting
Monday, March 28, 6:00 p.m.

Please join us for a potluck dinner and an evening of interesting conversation. A study is underway in East Providence to determine the historical significance of the mill village of Phillipsdale. East Providence Historical Society members Nancy Moore, President/Preservation, Edna Anness, 2nd Vice President/ Curator, and David Kelleher, former East Providence Historic Properties Commissioner, will discuss the area of research, the study to date, and the significance of creating a local historic district. If you have a specific question for the panel, please email your questions to info@ephist.org or leave a phone message at 401-438-1750.

Tip Of The Baker's Hat . . .

. . . to the following members who baked for the November members' meeting:

- Miriam Kenny
- Mona Breault
- Edna Anness
- Pat Henry.



In Memory Of:

**June Brewster
Robert Radway**



***Sadly missed...fondly
remembered***

The East Providence Historical Society

is dedicated to preserving the heritage
and enjoying the history of our city.

**If you are not a member we invite
you to join now.**

Annual dues are \$15 individual, \$25
family or business, or a Life
Membership for \$150.

Please make check payable to:

East Providence Historical Society

and mail membership form to

**Mona Breault, 23 Case Street,
Rumford, RI 02916**



Membership Form

New

Renewal/Change

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

\$15 Individual

\$25 Family/Business

\$150 Life

An EPHS alumnus founded and first directed the Choraleer chorus and Sophomore Girls' chorus

50+ years ago.

Where is Virginia Yuro now?

by Virginia (Yuro) Walker and Susan Cady*



Students from the East Providence Senior High School (EPHS) on Taunton Ave. moved into the new Pawtucket Ave. senior high school building in 1952. The new building included a separate wing for the music program and a 75 foot long swimming pool. Dr. Stephen Farnum was the Supervisor of Music in Secondary Schools for East Providence and conducted a well-disciplined music and band program. Accompanied by the senior high school band, students entertained full house crowds with new water ballets and aqua shows.

During high school, Miss Virginia Yuro began organ lessons and continued to play the piano and sing Classical and Church Music Repertoire. While a senior at the new EPHS, Virginia was a singer who toured New England with Dr. Farnum's school band. She

played the leading soprano role as the Captain's daughter, Josephine, in the senior class play, "HMS Pinafore", a two act musical by Gilbert and Sullivan. A member of the faculty, Dr. Miss Alice Waddington played the alto lead of "Buttercup". The Crimson yearbook described Virginia as "talented. Ambition: organist and choir director." With a scholarship, she attended Boston University to obtain a Fine and Applied Arts degree. In the 1958-1959 school year, Virginia returned to EPHS to begin her first teaching job, teaching under Dr. Farnum. She was given free rein to help expand the Chorus Department and taught Choral Music, Music History and Theory classes.

A large Mixed Chorus of 200 students already existed in 1959. As the newly hired choir director, Miss Yuro formed a new, smaller select chorus named the "Townie Choraliens or Choraleers". This group of 25-30 girls sang songs ranging from spirituals and folk songs to show tunes and pops. The singers originally wore red choir robes with white satin stoles. Their signature black one piece, knee length dress with long white gloves and pearl necklaces remained a tradition until 1990. The chorus originally sang at Christmas and Easter school assemblies, Parents and Teachers Association (PTA)

meetings, churches, nursing homes, and occasionally with the EPHS band. In later years, the Choraleers traveled to invited performances and won awards at the All-State Festivals and RIMEA Choral Festivals. At least two Choraleer graduates became Broadway singers.

In the Fall of 1959, the music department expanded its music program with the hiring of Mr. John Pavao. He directed a new select Mixed Chorus and the Crimson Boys' Choir. The boys wore choir robes with white shirts and ties. Mr. Pavao was trained to teach band instruments. He co-taught with Dr. Farnum and later became the director of the senior high school band when Dr. Farnum retired. Under Miss Yuro's direction, a new younger group, the Sophomore Girls' Chorus was added to the choral program. These girls wore white, long sleeve blouses with dark knee length skirts. They sang at school assemblies and were invited to sing at various community organizations.

The three music teachers also kept busy assisting students with the annual spring music theatre productions. Alec Wilder's musical, the "Lowland Sea", a one-act opera set in a whaling town similar to Nantucket, was performed in 1960. In March of 1961, the

Continued on next page...

Virginia Yuro

From page 3

musical comedy, Finian's Rainbow (by E. Y. Harburg) involved over 80 dancing and singing students. This is a fictitious, lively story about a stolen Irish pot of gold and how wishes it grants changed the lives of several people. After a joyful three years working with the EPHS students and staff, in 1961, Miss Yuro returned to college. She attended the Hartt College of Music at Hartford University working on her Master's Degree in Music. She taught Choral Music at Classical High School in Springfield, MA for three years before moving to Colorado in 1967. In Colorado Springs, Virginia married John R. Walker and taught elementary music classes and directed extra-curricular choruses for the Cheyenne Mountain School District near Colorado Springs, CO. The Orff instrument

methods were used to teach students how to perform.

A few years after the death of her husband, Mrs. Walker began missionary work with an intercessory prayer focus for "at risk" children and the poor in Guatemala. Under the covering of St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church in Colorado Springs, Co., she worked for the Lily of the Valley's Girl's Home for seven years, in San Lucas Sac, Guatemala. There she started a Day Care Center for working mothers with her ministry partner, Sonia, a Guatemalan teacher, and they founded another Girl's Home. Over the years, the team taught Bible classes and trained Christian workers to teach children. Mrs. Walker worked with her pastor in Parramos, Guatemala to lead Bible classes for alcoholics and drug addicts. Since 2005, she now works with the Christian Life Church in Rehoboth, MA. to support a

"Special Kids" program for Early Childhood Stimulation and Special Needs Children in the town of San Lucas Sac, Guatemala. Currently, the on-location director, Sonia, is completing renovations on a building to serve as the school house.

After 28 years of mission work, Mrs. Walker has no plans to retire. Although she no longer lives in Guatemala, Virginia is still active with the Mission's administrative and communication duties, editing a monthly Mission Prayer Update and Newsletter, and seeking sponsors from her Rhode Island residence. Mrs. Virginia (Yuro) Walker can be contacted at the Christian Life Church, 222 Plain St. Route 118, Rehoboth, MA 02769. Church Phone (508) 252-3364, www.CLCrehoboth.org.

Some fifty years after founding the Choraleers, Mrs. Virginia (Yuro) Walker recalls fond

memories of her EPHS classmates, the music program she helped expand, and her choral students. Virginia is proud of their many accomplishments.

*Susan Cady is writing historical articles about East Providence, RI. Share your personal stories about these 4 teachers with her at nctmk@hotmail.com or via the East Providence Historical Society, info@ephist.org.



East Providence Historical Society collection

The 1959 Choraleers in the Crimson, the East Providence High School yearbook.

Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener



March is an awakening month, but do not rush things in the garden. Begin by sharpening your pruning shears. You will need them after all of the heavy snow from this winter. Assess your perennials, shrubs and small trees for snow and winter damage. Many plants will have broken branches and may not survive. Others may need more than this coming season to regain their beauty. You will have to decide if you can live with an unsightly plant for a year.

First of all, prune out damaged, broken branches. Make clean pruning cuts with a bypass pruner for a sharp clean cut. Make your cut so the new growth will enhance the overall shape of your plant. Generally we prune above an outward facing bud. If the center of your plant has a damaged or bear spot, you may want to prune to allow a bud to grow into the center to fill in where snow has damaged your plant. Many plants can be reduced by 1/3 in height or thickness of shoots. This will allow for new growth and an improved shape. Some flowering shrubs may suffer from loss of flowers. Others can be shaped after flowering in spring.

Consult a professional if you are unsure, have branches thicker than 2", or have damage 5' above the ground.

Roses and fruit trees should be pruned in a similar manner, but wait until after St. Patrick's Day to begin. It is still too early.

Start seeds of annuals and design your gardens and plantings for the upcoming season.

Gently push perennials and bulbs that have heaved by freezing/thawing back into the soil.

Memorial Fund

The Society's Memorial Fund was established in 1993, in memory of past members, for "the betterment of the Society and with no specific purpose".

The Memorial Fund is a qualified endowment administered by the Executive Committee. Members and friends wishing to contribute may make checks payable to the East Providence Historical Society and mail to the Society at
Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916-4774

Gifts To The Museum

David Sanderson

The Robert Sanderson
Collection of papers from his
many years of teaching in
the East Providence School
system

Louise Karas

Two Rumford cookbooks-one
a red one and the other a
pamphlet

Thank you, your gifts are
appreciated.

Help Wanted For The Museum

We may need help with
accessioning the Clint Sellw
Collection which is very large.
We will start accessioning on
April 3rd when the house warms
up. Students from the High
school are also welcome if they
need hours for a Community
Service project.

If someone has a tall bookcase
hanging around we could use it
for the Sellw Collection as a
display area.

We could also use a long file for
4x6 file cards.



Sr Mary McManus
Carole Vellucci
Richard Gutman
Park Ranger John McNiff



John Hunt House

East Providence Historical Society
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Providence, RI
Permit #2712**

Historical Marker Program

Your home may be eligible for a marker. Any building in the City of East Providence which contributes to the historical development or architectural character of the City is eligible to be considered for a Historical Marker.

Request information by sending your name, address and phone number to the

Marker Program

East Providence Historical Society
P. O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916-4774

Election of Officers

It's that time again . . .

Have you been thinking that you would like to make a larger contribution of time to EPHS? Our Board will have openings this year as members lives rearrange themselves.

This working Board is one of the most dedicated around and we always welcome new ideas and new blood. Call Nancy Moore - 438-4299 - if you are interested in knowing more.