



Chester Historical Society

June 2016 Newsletter

Community Groups: These Too Make a Town

The Deacons Car Club. Chester Fife & Drum Corps. The Italian American Mutual Aid Society. Cedar Lake Pleasure Club. Pattaconk Fish & Game Club. Chester International Links Association, Chester Rotary, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.... All these groups (and more) make a town, our town!

This summer at the Chester Museum at The Mill, you're invited to explore "Celebrating Chester Community Groups," a new exhibit curated by Keith Dauer and Sandy Senior-Dauer. "We wanted to feature the variety of groups, clubs and service organizations that have provided volunteer support as well as social events for our small town through the centuries," said Sandy. "There are so many,

however, there was no way we could fit them all in this year, so we're already looking ahead to future exhibits."

Skip Hubbard added, "It's fascinating to learn about groups like the Deacons Car Club, plus reflect on the long-time contributions of so many groups, so many residents."

The Chester Museum at The Mill is open to the public for self-guided tours on Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., from Saturday, May 28 through the end of October. Tours on other days can be arranged by calling curator Diane Lindsay at 860-526-2443. The museum is air-conditioned as well as handicapped accessible. Admission is free.

In Support of Community

Italian Americans Banded Together

The June 3, 1902 *Hartford Courant* reported on a Chester census conducted for the Connecticut Bible Society. The 1,314 "souls" in Chester were broken down into 332 families, 17 of them Italian totaling 105 members. The Italians were the clear leaders among the 12 percent of Chester that was foreign-born.

The 1910 census lists over 40 Italian "heads of household," many with large families.

That same year, Aug. 27, 1910 to be exact, a Certificate of Incorporation for The Italian American Mutual Aid Society, Incorporated was filed. The signers of the certificate were Colombo Castello, Charles Castelli, Vincenzo Ferrari, Peter Montana, John Germini and Joseph Zanelli.

The Societa' Italo-Americana Di M.S. is one of the features of Chester Historical Society's summer exhibit at "The Mill." Banners, badges, flags, minutes of meetings, etc. are all included.

Article two of the society's by-laws outlined the purpose: "...solidarity, the need of the members to unite themselves, the liberty, brotherhood and equality, the mutual benefit, the instruction, the morality, and the welfare of its members."



Two ribbons from the Italian American Mutual Aid Society and one from the Cedar Lake Pleasure Club. To learn more of these community groups and their members, visit the 2016 exhibit at Chester Museum at The Mill.

The by-laws do, in fact, clearly define who could receive aid and for what reason.

The society, from its inception, was involved in the community and very patriotic. During World War I, dinners, dances, etc. benefited the Red Cross, Liberty Bonds sales and/or the Home Guard.

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A Focus on Membership

...The Chester Historical Society is highly valued and supported by all Chester residents. Chester Museum at The Mill will attract residents and visitors by providing entertaining and educational programs and experiences that promote pride in and respect for our history, as well as enthusiasm for our future... Vision Statement

These words serve as our guide and, with the exception of a fundraising event, we have been able to offer everything for free—every public program, visits to our award-winning museum, vintage baseball games, etc. Open and free for all, whether Chester resident or not, whether a member or not. So, how can we continue to do it?

We depend on the support of annual memberships, primarily from Chester, some beyond. As they say on TV, ‘from people like you’. We supplement membership support with fund raising events and grants for special projects.

Personally, my wife Karen and I joined about 40 years ago, not long after moving to Chester. We enjoyed many of the programs and events over the years; it was only in the last 10 years that I also decided to volunteer, helping others to create Chester Museum at The Mill.

The museum exhibits and Society programs give us the opportunity to appreciate the town’s history, reinforcing our family decision to be members many years ago.

This year a prime goal of the Board of Trustees is to increase our local membership by at least 25 new members to ensure that we can continue to offer the high level and variety of exhibits and programs you have come to expect.

Below a few of your neighbors comment on their decision to support Chester Museum at The Mill and the Society with an annual membership.

Today, we invite you to join with your support as well.

Skip Hubbard
President



“The Chester Historical Society and its Chester Museum at The Mill plays such a vital part in the history of our quaint, little town we call Chester. This is where many of us have learned the story behind the naming of roads like Butter Jones Road, Baker Road and Wig Hill Road. I like the feeling that our annual membership helps support the many programs and exhibits offered at the museum and at the Meetinghouse.” **Debra Calamari**

“Unlike so many of our friends and neighbors, we did not grow up in Chester, or even in the state of Connecticut. Learning about Chester through the Historical Society has given us a wonderful sense of community. We continue to support the Historical Society because we feel that it is important to all, young and old, to understand the past in order to appreciate the future.” **Marian & Jim Bairstow**



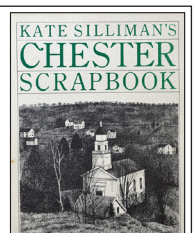
“Membership in the Chester Historical Society is educational for all—members, visitors and, especially for those of us who wish to dig a little deeper. As I am maritime-oriented, I noticed a couple of references to shipbuilding here. Through extensive

research I have uncovered what a shipbuilding and trade history we have. Did you know we built sailing ships in Chester Cove? Membership has encouraged me to discover more about my town and to document this uncovered history to be shared with others.” **Joel Severance**



“We moved to Chester in 2007. We were early visitors to Chester Museum at The Mill when it opened in 2010. We were instantly awed by the collection. We have been enthralled by each new themed exhibit and have enjoyed numerous Society events. But the best aspect of the Historical Society is its members. They love their town and are dedicated to keeping the history of Chester and its generations of people alive for today and future generations. We encourage you to visit the Society website, <http://chesterhistoricalsociety.org>. But, if you really want to support Chester and its history, become a member of the Chester Historical Society today.” **Kris & Mel Seifert**

BONUS - The first 25 new members can pick up a free 264-page copy of “Kate Silliman’s Chester Scrapbook” (\$15 value) during museum hours





Chester Museum at The Mill

Chester Historical Society

Membership Form Through June 2017

Chester Historical Society memberships (except Life Memberships) are paid annually. We ask all members, including Life Members, to complete the personal info and their volunteer support interests.

PLEASE INCLUDE ON THE MEMBERSHIP ROLL FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Please Note: Your e-mail address is important to us. It's become a primary way to inform our members of Society activities and includes the Robbie Collamore Music Series. We do not share your email addresses with others.

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

I would like to be a Society member for the next year as indicated

- Student (\$15)
- Individual (\$20)
- Family (\$30)
- Benefactor (\$100)
- Sponsor / Corporate (\$250)
- Life (\$500) One-time payment to enroll one or two individuals in the same household as lifetime members.
- Please accept my additional donation for \$ _____

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

I have interest in working with others in the following areas

- Archival of documents
- Greeting visitors at Museum
- Oral history interviews
- Exhibit Planning
- Program Planning
- Museum Maintenance
- Refreshments for events
- Videotape Society events
- Fundraiser Committee
- Mailings preparation
- Articles for newsletter
- Publications Committee
- Sunday Market Table

All dues and donations are fully tax-deductible.

**Make checks payable to *Chester Historical Society*
Mail to: CHS, PO Box 204, Chester, CT 06412**

9 West Main Street
Post Office Box 204
Chester, CT 06412

860.526.5781
ChesterHistoricalSociety.org

Please consider your check your receipt.
Thank you for your support.

Chester Historical Society

Membership as of May 2016

Life

Randy & Chris Allinson
Frank W. Appleton, Jr.
Ray & Liz Archambault
Thomas & Kathleen Archambault
Albert Armington
Phyllis Bevington
Thomas & Marianne Bladek
Robert & Mildred Blair
Lary Bloom
Bill Bonfanti & Madeleine Winans
David Brooks
Shirley Feldmann Bush
Gregory Cook
Michael & Felise Cressman
John W. Dalton
Keith Dauer & Sandy Senior-Dauer
Barbara Delaney
Deb Dembo
Elise Piquet-Doll
Gerry & Cynthia Dubey
Henry & Britt Flanagan
Jill Gladding
Peter & Jan Good
Robert & Lynda Gorman
Alva G. Greenberg
Mark & Cheri Ferrari Habersang
Donald & Monique Hanson **
Karen & Jamie Hart *
Leni Herschman
Skip & Karen Hubbard
Cary Schuler Hull & Al Malpa
Mrs. Edward C. Hull
Nathan & Geraldine Jacobson
Kathryn Watrous Jones
Jon & Doreen Joslow
Pauline Kaplan
Mrs. Jenny Kitsen
Steve & Ann Kitteredge
Robert P. Klomp
Pat Kotchen
Pam Larson
Robert & Stacey Lewis
Carol LeWitt
D. Leonard Lieberman
Lorraine Lieberman
Margaret Lieberman
Donald MacDermid
Jess Maghan & Peter Walker
Robert Miceli
Christopher Moore
Deborah Morrow
Joel Motley III
Martin & Lois Nadel
Jil Nelson

Charles G. Nessler, Jr
Sandra Davis Owen
Jo-Ann & Michael Price
Robert Radicchi
Harvey Redak & Justine Tobis
Glenn & Peg Reyer
Jeff & Holly Ridgway
Michael & Sally Sanders
Arthur & Judith Schaller
Evelyn Schneider
Rick & Terry Schreiber
Dr. Kim Senay
Joel & Adrienne Severance
Bruce & Beverly Watrous
Lynn Weymer
Whitelaw & Margaret Wilson
Virginia Winans
William & Victoria Winterer
James Zanardi
Richard & Joan Ziemann

Benefactor

John & Janice Benda
Ms. Spencer Boyd
& George Bradley
Edward & Debra Calamari
Gil & Anne Bartlett
Arthur & Mabyn Christianson
Tammy Eustis *
Mary & Bryant Frank *
Helene & Ned Johnson
Jules & Kathleen Kranich
Virgil & Jean Lloyd
Phyllis M. McDowell
Jean Mulford
Charles & Jo Anne Park
Sandy & Deedee Prisløe
Paul & Dawn Radicchi
Janice Carlisle & Joseph Roach
Hila & Saul Rosen
John & Kimberly Stack
Laura Straub
Paul & Anna Shubik Sweeney

Family

Eric & Ginny Anderson
James & Marian Bairstow
Jack & Sosse Baker
Paul & Wendie Barbarino
Mary Walsh & Rob Bibbiani
Joyce Birtcher
Robert Blair & Kris Pollock
Dr. Geoffrey R.H. Burn
& Ms. Judy Palmieri *
Geraldine Carini-Garcia

Edward & Gail Castelli
James & Diana Castelli
Ted & JoAnna Chapin
Herbert & Sharon Clark III
Emelia DeMuis
& Stephen DeBenedet
Lol & Charlene Fearon
Richard Fensky & Elaine LaFlair *
Mario & Dorothy Gioco
Roger & Elizabeth Goodnow
Allen & Pamela Graham
Edward Grzybowski
Richard & Mary Harrall
Carol & Coe Hawkins
Louis & Marianne Heft
Charley Hnilicka
Richard & Patricia Holloway
Geoffrey & Carol Jacobson
Joel & Susan Jacobson
Harold & Linda Jones, Jr.
Randy, Beth & Emily Judd
Gerald & Mary Kelly
John & Wendy King
David & Diane Kukta
Genevieve M. Laskowski
Jeff & Lori Lawrie
Sam & Nikki Lindberg
Claude & Catrin Martin
Kenneth Maxwell & Arlene Tunney
Ed & Peg Meehan
Allan Mehlberg & Spruce Roden
Steven & Kathryn Merola
John & Madaline Meyer
Ann Monaghan
Richard & Lorraine Morrow
Charles & Susan Murphy
Arthur H. Napier III
& Barbara-Jan Wilson
Lance & Dawn Parker
Donald C. Paulson
Michael & Susan Peck
Don & Kristen Perreault
Kim & Kathy Price
John & Jennifer Rannestad
Jim & Marie Ready
Cookie & Fred Robertson
John & Lisa Schroeder
Mel & Kris Seifert
Richard & Elaine Sevigny
Bob & MaryJo Sortland
Suzanne & Steve Spires
Jacqueline Stack & Mark Riggio
Van & Barbara Standke
Alex & Mary Ann Stein
Richard & Leslie Strauss

William Swartzbaugh
& Joan Sepessy
Melody & Philip Tierney
Peter & Sally Tiezzi, Jr.
Dave & Margo Viggiano
Wayne Wahala & Lisa Gauthier
Skip & Margaret Weisenburger
Ronald & Lois Wickson
George, Patty & Maggie Winter
Peter & Jane Zanardi
Burgi & Leo Zavatore
Bill & Agneta Ziegler

Individual

Robert Bandzes
Dale Bernardoni
Frances Bertelli
Sally Bibbiani
Tom Brelsford
Margaret Breslin
Samuel Chorches
Jewel Christy *
Audrey Conrad *
Marta Daniels
Alma Carini Doak
Robert Dona
John H. Ford
Jane Gordon
Elizabeth Gourlay
Dorothy Lavezzoli
Edward Leffingwell Jr.
Tedd Levy
Diane Lindsay
Lillian Manville
William Myers
Hazel Negrelli
Betsy Watrous Pasinella
Bettie Perreault
Charles Priest
Bette Radicchi
Lewis Clark Robison
H. Peter Satagaj
Judith Lynde Schondorf
Sharon Soja
Rick Spencer
Ruth Thayer
Gregory Thompson
Elizabeth Tremalgia
Louise R. VanHaverbeke
Nancy Watkins
Daisy Watrous
Elizabeth Watrous
Anne Winslow
*New Members
**New Membership Level

Grant to Accelerate Archival Access

Thanks to a nearly \$4,000 grant from the **Community Foundation of Middlesex County**, the Society can move faster in archiving its collection and bringing that collection to the public. The technology grant replaced 8-year-old hardware with new computers, printer, scanner and an updated network, already in place at the Society's archive room in the Meetinghouse basement. "With a laptop, I'm excited about the prospect of having portable access to our collection," said curator Diane Lindsay. "The grant will also facilitate collecting oral histories."



Large displays and a laptop are part of the new technology upgrades to the Society's Archive Room. Pictured above (front to back) are Pat Kosky, Ruth Thayer and Janice Benda. The archiving activity covers five hours each week.



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In Support of Community (Continued from Page 1)

It was the annual picnic, however, that people remembered long after the society ceased to be a viable force in Chester. Alfredo Tiezzi proposed a last Sunday in August picnic in 1923. Unlike the all-male membership, wives and children were included in the proposal.

It became a "count the days" event. The 1975 Chester Bicentennial Commission's book on the town's Italians is entitled "Today's The Day," a phrase that came from those picnics. They were grand parties, complete with incredible food and

drink, games and music. They were held at various locales including Cedar Lake. Third- and fourth-generation Chester Italians grew up hearing picnic stories.

The Italo-Americano Society of Chester never had a building of its own. The original requirements – you had to be fully Italian and male – were difficult to maintain. The organization's official demise came in the 1970s, four decades after its viability had vanished.

Something for Everyone

Numerous Winter/Spring Society programs and events are now behind us and the opening of the museum season with a new exhibit (page 1) is upon us.

Memories were stirred on Jan. 24th when people gathered at the Meetinghouse for a presentation and crackerbarrel discussion of **'It Happened to Jane'**, filmed in Chester in 1958. On April 9th the Meetinghouse was again the venue for another **Creative Challenge**, as artists donated works based on manicure sticks formerly made by Bishop & Watrous. The always popular event raised \$4,200 for the Society's operations and programs.

More recently, nearly 40 people gathered at the town's Community Room to listen to **Yenowich Sisters** Lillian Bella and Matilda Dumbrill recall Chester and their childhood memories of growing up in the family household near the top of Wig Hill.

We also opened the Mill this winter as a site for two Chester Library programs, a **Community Knit** gathering and a program on the **History of Connecticut Beer**.

Other than visiting Chester Museum at The Mill this summer, the next event on the horizon will be the third **Tri-Town Vintage Base Ball** game on September 18th, a family-fun Sunday afternoon. Then be sure to bring something from your home or attic to the Society's annual **Antiques & Jewelry Appraisal Day** on Nov. 12th.



Lil Bella and Matilda Dumbrill listen to comments from the audience during the Yenowich Sisters program in April.



Chester Historical Society
P.O. Box 204
Chester, CT 06412-0204

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Deep River, CT

Postal Patron
Chester, CT 06412

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, Sept. 18

Tri-town Vintage Base Ball Game

Devitt Field, Deep River, 2 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 12

13th Antiques & Jewelry Appraisal Day

St. Joseph Parish Hall, 8:30-noon.

Stay Informed:

www.chesterhistoricalsociety.org

www.collomoreconcerts.com

Museum Hosting: You Can Volunteer

"I still find I'm learning every time I visit the museum," said Sosse Baker. "And I find it's even more fun when as a host I get to welcome visitors." Other volunteer hosts often express the same thoughts. Each Saturday and Sunday we open the museum to residents and visitors alike. The main role of the host is to orient visitors to the museum; a background in Chester history, while at times helpful, is by no means a requirement. "Our museum experience is self-guided. We ask volunteers to be hosts, not docents, and they often partner with another during a shift," said Diane Lindsay, who will be scheduling hosts this summer and fall. We encourage others, including those new to Chester, to inquire about hosting by contacting Diane (860-526-2423 or dianedavelindsay@att.net).

Robbie Collomore Music Series Celebrates 43rd Season

With a four-concert lineup that begins on September 25th with a String Quartet and follows with Cajun music, classical piano and concludes with Folk & Blues, there is little reason to leave town for a fill of excellent music.

Individual or season tickets
(4 concerts for the price of 3)

See www.collomoreconcerts.org
for a full schedule, artist bios and
to reserve your tickets.

Funding for the mailing of newsletter provided by Essex Savings Bank as part of its Community Investment Program

