

History Preservation

The History Preservation Committee is responsible for the Society's Collection, for acquiring new items, and for cataloging, preserving, and accessing them and other Collection items for later use.

A core group of Diane Lindsay, Ruth Thayer, Shirley Miceli, Sandra Tilley, and Shirley Feldmann Bush work each Friday morning either in the Meeting House Archive Room or in the vaults at the Mill. A larger committee was formed to discuss particular items to be accessed and/or policy issues concerning the Collection. Other members of that Committee are Donna Carlson, Marie-Ann Heft, Rob Miceli, Elsie Straub, and Joan Ziemann. It has not met during this period.

One of the Friday group's functions has been to serve the Society and the larger community as a research resource, finding and interpreting Collection materials for a particular purpose. Since the Chester Museum at The Mill was opened two years ago, there has been new interest in donations to the Collection, plus offers of loaned items to supplement exhibits.

The group worked closely with Society Museum Consultant Brenda Milkofsky in preparing the 2011 Civil War exhibit, by researching records and searching the Collection for relevant artifacts. For the 2012 exhibit the staff has made extensive transcriptions of the Ambrose Pratt Civil War letters.

The transfer of objects and archives from storage areas at the Meeting House to the vaults at the Mill has continued. Only after objects and archives are catalogued and photographed (or scanned), are they transported to the shelves of the vaults. Over half of the Collection is now at the Mill, listed in the office computer database and ready for exhibits or research.

The task of cataloging the entire Collection is still daunting. We continue to find many valuable items in the Archives files left there from the Society's early days. As more systematic procedures are in place, the full extent of the Collection is becoming apparent. Since considerable work remains, we always welcome new volunteers to join us on Friday mornings.

Shirley Feldmann Bush, Curator



Trustee Nate Jacobson (second from right) has led a team that has re-discovered the site of Chester's earliest industry. Above, on private land near Goose Hill Road, lies the foundation of the 1730s grist mill operated by two brothers, Gideon and Abraham Waterhouse.



More than 40 artists responded to the Society's Bone Arts Challenge, attracting an enthusiastic gathering to the Meeting House for the March Silent Auction and Reception.

Fundraising Events

While raising much-needed funds for the Historical Society, our fundraisers also have a valuable historical component, whether it's providing information about the history and value of a person's "antiques" or repurposing items made many years ago in Chester.

Our 9th Antiques Appraisal event, held Nov. 10 at St. Joseph Parish Center, was a record-breaker. We raised \$3390, with 13 appraisers (all of whom donate their time to us), 330 appraisal items, and 141 attendees. Our 10th Appraisal is already scheduled for Nov. 9, 2013.

Our spring fundraiser, Bone Arts, featured a champagne reception and silent auction at the Meeting House on March 23. Forty-four artists created unique works based on simple bone handles manufactured by the former Bishop & Watrous Novelty Works. The successful event, initiated and chaired by Sosse Baker, raised \$5,838. Building on the enthusiasm of both artists and attendees, next spring, on Saturday, March 22, we'll host the "Unearthed in Chester" reception and silent auction in the Meeting House.

This year, thanks to Sandy Senior-Dauer and Leif Nilsson, we also held a rousing Meeting House concert, with two local bands, The Side Doors and The Dizzy River, attended by 100 people and raising just over \$1,000.

Cary Hull, Chairman



Steve Lutar of Guilford Coin Exchange was one of 13 appraisers who donated their time and expertise at the Society's 9th Antiques Appraisal Day in November.

Chester Historical Society

2012 - 13 Membership

LIFE

Randy & Chris Allinson
 Frank W. Appleton, Jr.
 Harry & Hazel Archambault
 Thomas & Kathleen Archambault
 Ray & Liz Archambault
 Albert Armington
 Phyllis Bevington
 Thomas & Marianne Bladdek
 Robert & Mildred Blair
 Lary Bloom
 Bill Bonfani & Madeleine Winans
 David Brooks
 Gregory Cook
 Michael & Felise Cressman**
 Alys S. Cuneo & Lynn Weymer
 John W. Dalton
 Keith Dauer & Sandy Senior-Dauer
 Barbara Delaney
 Deb Dembo
 Elise Piquet-Doll
 Gerry & Cynthia Dubey
 Henry & Britt Flanagan
 Peter & Jan Good
 Robert Gorman
 Alva G. Greenberg
 Mark & Cheri Ferrari
 Habersang
 Leni Herschman
 Skip & Karen Hubbard
 Cary Schuler Hull & Al Malpa
 Mrs. Edward C. Hull
 Nathan & Geraldine Jacobson
 Kathryn Watrous Jones
 Jon & Doreen Joslow
 Howard & Pauline Kaplan
 Mrs. Jenny Kitsen
 Steve & Ann Kitteredge
 Robert P. Klomp
 Pat Kotchen
 Robert & Stacey Lewis
 Carol LeWitt
 D. Leonard Lieberman
 Lorraine Lieberman
 Margaret Lieberman
 Donald MacDermid
 Jess Maghan & Peter Walker
 Lou Matz
 Robert Miceli
 Christopher Moore
 David & 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
 Arthur & Judith Schaller
 Rick & Terry Schreiber**
 Dr. Kim Senay
 Joel & Adrienne Severance**
 Bruce & Beverly Watrous
 Mary Jane Watrous
 Virginia Winans
 William & Victoria Winterer
 James Zanardi
 Richard & Joan Ziemann

BENEFACTOR

Dale Bernardoni & Robert Wolfe**
 Ms. Spencer Boyd & George Bradley
 Edward & Debra Calamari
 Gil & Anne Bartlett
 Shirley Feldmann Bush
 Janice Carlisle & Joseph Roach
 Arthur & Mabyn Christianson
 Cal & Jill Gladding
 Donald & Monique Hanson
 Susan D. Joslow & Thomas W. Holland**
 Helene & Ned Johnson
 Virgil & Jean Lloyd
 Jean Mulford
 Charles & Jo Anne Park
 Sandy & Deedee Prisloe**
 Paul & Dawn Radicchi
 Hila & Saul Rosen
 Laura Straub
 Ed Swift**
 Eileen Sypher & John Yrchik*
 Elizabeth Watrous**
 Eleanor Westfall**
 Judy Rathbun Whitney
 Ron & Suzie Woodward

FAMILY

Eric & Ginny Anderson*
 Ernest & Antoinette Angersola
 Peter Auster & Lisa Wahle
 James & Marian Birstow
 Jack & Sosse Baker
 Bonnie & John Bennet
 Donald & Patricia Blake
 Scotty Bloch
 Mark Borton & Francine Cornaglia
 Linda Bosnak & Howard Smith
 Geraldine Carini-Garcia
 Donna & Rick Carlson, Jr.

Ernie & Pam Cartier
 Edward & Gail Castelli
 James & Diana Castelli
 Dick Chaffee & Susan Chetwin
 Ted & JoAnna Chapin
 Samuel Chorches
 Herbert & Sharon Clark III
 Angelique Craney & Steve Joseph
 Emelia DeMusis & Stephen DeBenedet
 Jody & Abbe Dole
 Lol & Charlene Fearon
 Frank & Helene Ferrari, Jr.
 Victor & Suzanne Fetter
 David Fredericks*
 Mario & Dorothy Gioco
 Allen & Pamela Graham
 Edward Grzybowski
 Marcus & Maryanne Hall
 Richard & Mary Harrall
 Skip & Jeanie Haskins*
 Louis & Marie Anne Heft
 Richard & Patricia Holloway
 John & Judi Ivimey
 Joel & Susan Jacobson
 Geoffrey & Carol Jacobson
 Sarah Jansen
 Bruce & Linda Johnston
 Jill Jones & Frank Kucharski
 Harold & Linda Jones, Jr.
 Randy, Beth & Emily Judd
 Peter Kehayias
 Gerald & Mary Kelly
 John & Wendy King
 Roger Koontz
 Jules & Kathleen Kranich
 David & Diane Kukta
 Genevieve M. Laskowski
 Sam & Nikki Lindberg
 Conrad & Lillian Manville
 Tom & Kathy Marsh
 Claude & Catrin Martin
 Ed & Amy Martorelli
 Kenneth Maxwell & Arlene Tunney
 Paul & Teresa McKee
 Ed & Peg Meehan
 Allan Mehlberg & Spruce Roden
 Michael & Mary Elizabeth Merlini
 Steven & Kathryn Merola
 John & Madaline Meyer
 Samuel & Mary Mirabito
 Thomas & Ann Monaghan
 Richard & Lorraine Morrow
 Charles & Susan Murphy
 Arthur H. Napier III & Barbara-Jan Wilson
 Hazel Negrelli

Donald C. Paulson
 Don & Kristen Perreault
 Patricia Petrus
 Kim & Kathy Price
 John & Jennifer Rannestad
 Bruce & Mary Rayner
 Jim & Marie Ready
 Cookie & Fred Robertson
 Gene & Sheila Robida
 Neal & Judith Robison
 Michael & Sally Sanders
 John & Lisa Schroeder
 Mel & Kris Seifert
 Richard & Elaine Sevigny
 Bob & MaryJo Sortland
 Jacqueline Stack & Mark Riggio
 John & Kimberly Stack
 Van & Barbara Standke
 Alex & Mary Ann Stein
 Richard & Leslie Strauss
 William Swartzbaugh & Joan Sepesy
 Peter & Sally Tiezzi, Jr.
 George & Linda Trevisani, Jr.
 Charles Vasilakis & Carol Hooper
 Dave & Margo Viggiano
 Wayne Wahala & Lisa Gauthier
 Skip & Margaret Weisenburger
 Ronald & Lois Wickson
 Whitelaw & Margaret Wilson
 George, Patty & Maggie Winter
 Peter & Jane Zanardi
 Burgi & Leo Zavatone
 Bill & Agneta Ziegler

INDIVIDUAL

Frances Bertelli
 Sally Bibbiani
 Joyce Birtcher
 Margaret Breslin
 Marta Daniels
 Alma Carini Doak
 Robert Dona
 Paula M. Dutka
 William R. Farrell*
 John H. Ford
 Beverley B. Fuller
 Elizabeth Gourlay

Martin L. Heft
 Anne Hesser
 Charley Hnilicka
 Carol Horvath
 Brian Howell
 Laurel Johnson
 Christopher Kearns
 Pamela Larson*
 Dorothy Lavezzoli
 Edward Leffingwell Jr.
 Tedd Levy
 Diane Lindsay
 Philip W. Maas Jr.
 Elizabeth Malloy
 Shirley Martin
 Sally Marvin
 Evelyn Mather
 Phyllis M. McDowell
 Shirley Miceli
 Dorothy Moseley
 Bill Myers
 Ben Novinski
 Betsy Watrous Pasinella
 Bettie Perreault
 Charles Priest
 Bette Radicchi*
 Lewis Clark Robison
 Matthew Sanders*
 H. Peter Satagaj
 Judith Lynde Schondorf
 Art Sherman*
 Ann Smith
 Sharon Soja
 Patricia Steger
 Chuck Still
 Elsie Straube
 Ruth Thayer
 Elizabeth Tremalgia
 Louise R. VanHaverbeke
 William Vollers*
 Nancy Watkins
 Daisy Watrous
 Dorothy S. Whiting

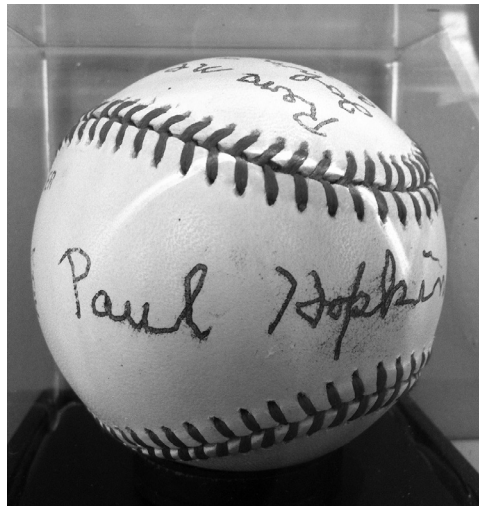
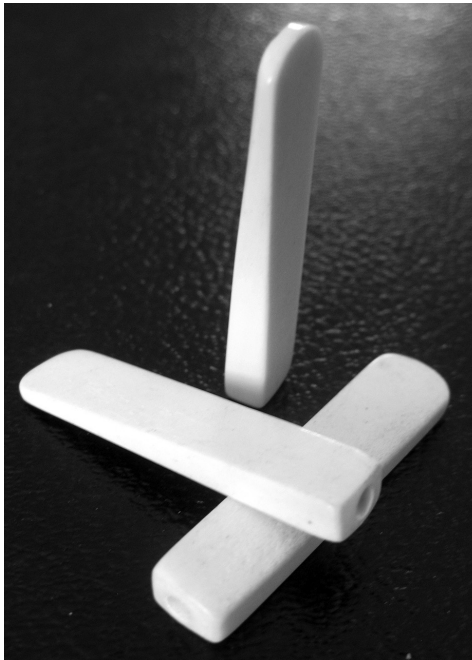
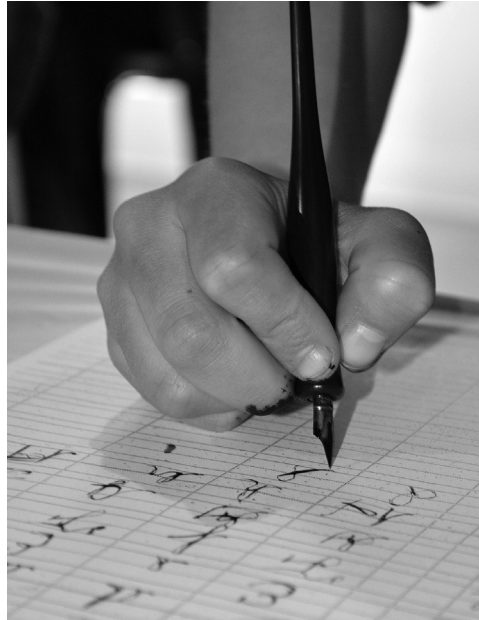
* New Member
 ** New Membership Level
 Membership as of 6/1/13



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Chester Historical Society



Annual Report 2012-2013

President's Message

Time flies; but that's appropriate for an organization focused on history. As we close our 43rd Society year, we have already opened our fourth museum season with an exciting new exhibit, *Over the River & Through the Woods: Early Transportation in Chester*.

A year ago we instituted a free admission, donation-only policy for Chester Museum at The Mill, a decision that has been validated on at least two fronts. We welcomed 800 visitors to the museum, more than twice as many as the prior year, and almost 300 people stopped by the museum during Chester Carnivale day. At the same time, revenues from donations exceeded the prior admission fees.

We also were more active in marketing Chester Museum at The Mill, using a new brochure, "Get Lost in Heritage," at the Chester Sunday Market and at the Chester Fair, where 600 visitors passed through the Society Building.

More visitors brought more visibility to the museum and the Society, producing a welcome increase in the donation or loaning of artifacts and archival items to our collections and exhibits.

Our 2012 seasonal exhibit *Beyond the Battlefield*, our second year of Civil War reflections, focused on the home front. Supplementing the exhibit, we published a pamphlet, "Letters from the Civil War," using Chester correspondence from our archives.

Once the museum season was over, our annual series of public and school programs began. Following a fall walking tour of Laurel Hill Cemetery, we presented two transportation-themed public programs, Trains (November) and Trolleys (March), to promote our upcoming 2013 exhibit. We hosted the third and sixth grade classes in custom days at the museum.

On the fundraising front, three successful and varied events resulted in achieving an optimistic budget. November's Antiques Appraisal Day drew an enthusiastic crowd from

near and far. In March, more than 40 artists showcased original works using a bone handle produced by the former Bishop & Watrous Novelty Works Co. The well-attended Bone Arts Reception and Silent Auction produced another nice revenue source. Two bands, The Side Doors and The Dizzy River Band, donated their talents at a Meeting House Concert in April, capping the fundraising event cycle.

The growth of our Annual Appeal should be as pleasing to all members as it is to the Trustees. We realized \$8,000 of support from 94 contributors this past year, nearly a twofold increase from just three years ago (\$4,200; 44 contributors).

We did a nice job containing fixed and operating expenses, allowing more revenues to flow to exhibits, public programs and outreach programs. Achieving our budget goals also enabled us to allocate funds to a Maintenance Reserve account.

We were one of 25 societies and museums in the state to be selected by the Connecticut Humanities Council to participate in a two-year Standards and Excellence Program (StEPs) for History Organizations.

We all deeply regretted the passing of Shirley Miceli this past winter. Shirley served as President (1999-2003) when the Society made the difficult decision to purchase the former Griswold Shop Building, giving the Society its first real home and a future site for a museum. A native and former pharmacist in town, Shirley was a valuable reference and story source who also served the Society as a Trustee and its Archivist. She is missed by the entire Chester community.

We are thankful for the continuing interest and support of our entire membership. Now we look forward to a busy museum season and the addition of many new friends of Chester Museum at The Mill and the Chester Historical Society. Today is tomorrow's history...

Skip Hubbard

June 2013



Chester Historical Society

Officers

Skip Hubbard	<i>President</i>
Donna Carlson	<i>Vice President</i>
Jill Jones	<i>Treasurer</i>
Cheri Ferrari Habersang	<i>Secretary</i>
Shirley Feldmann Bush	<i>Curator</i>
Robert Miceli	<i>Historian</i>
Shirley Miceli	<i>Archivist</i>
Martin Nadel	<i>Robbie Collomore Music Series</i>

Trustees

May 2013	May 2014	May 2015
Jim Bairstow	Art Christianson	Donna Carlson
Ed Castelli	Paula Dutka	Keith Dauer
Pam Graham	Nate Jacobson	Cheri Ferrari Habersang
Denise Learned	Pam Larson	Bettie Perreault
Margaret Leiberman	Bette Radicchi	Matthew Sanders
Sandy Senior-Dauer	Rick Schreiber	Eileen Sypher
Joan Ziemann	Beverly Watrous	Bill Vollers

Front Cover (clockwise, from top left): (1) Postal mark from Chester Civil War letter from 2012 *Beyond the Battlefield* exhibit; (2) Cursive writing with a quill pen is part of the curriculum when elementary school third graders have their annual day at the museum; (3) An autographed baseball by Paul Hopkins, Chester's only major league player, is displayed on the museum's second floor; (4) Bone handles manufactured by the former Bishop & Watrous Novelty Works, which were distributed to artists for the Society's Bone Arts Challenge.

Exhibits & Programs

The 2012 seasonal exhibit, *Beyond the Battlefield: Chester on the Homefront 1861-65*, focused on letters written by anxious Chester mothers, wives, other family and friends to their loved ones away waging the war against the Confederacy. Stories were told through artifacts from domestic life, documents from town records, photos and recordings on audio soundsticks.

In August, more than 600 people visited our Chester Fair building exhibit, which showcased C. J. Bates & Son, Inc. knitting products and other selected items from our archives.

Children from Chester Elementary School visited the museum twice—third graders to experience a recreated school day from 1904 and sixth graders to learn about the Civil War and tour the *Streams of Change* exhibit upstairs. We were grateful for the letters from students describing their favorite objects and experiences.

During the summer, museum consultant Brenda Milkofsky led an excellent workshop for an enthusiastic and receptive group of Society members, leading to a brainstorming session about future exhibits and programs. Dozens of great ideas were considered, but early transportation in Chester had the most appeal to everyone. With steamboats, the ferry, early roads, the train and the trolley, the committee had a wealth of information to research and present. We felt that the exhibit would be particularly topical with all the changes and challenges facing the town center over the next few years.

A grant was written, requesting funds to support a 2013 exhibit and six public programs supporting the exhibit theme. The Community Foundation of Middlesex County notified the Society in December that our full request of \$4,655 had been approved.

Following a late October Laurel Hill Cemetery Walk hosted by Rob Miceli and Cheri Ferrari Habersang, the transportation-themed programs began.



Chester-based S. Silliman & Co. patented the portable inkstands (far right) that facilitated letters from the field during the Civil War.



Over the River & Through the Woods, our 2013 exhibit, was made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. Above, Nancy Fischbach, Cynthia Clegg and Thayer Talbott of the Foundation celebrate opening night of the museum season with Society exhibit co-chair Sandy Senior-Dauer.

In December, our program featured Max Miller, Connecticut Valley Railroad expert, historian and collector of artifacts and memorabilia. It drew a large audience from a many towns in the area, affirming the popularity of our choice of programming. A packed Meeting House enjoyed a program on the Shoreline Trolley in February presented by Bruce Edgerton and Ted MacKenzie.

The 2013 exhibit, *Over the River & Through the Woods*, debuted with a reception for members on May 24th, and the museum opened for the season the following day.

Sandy Senior-Dauer and Keith Dauer, Exhibits/Programs co-chairs
Committee: Bert Armington, Skip Hubbard, Cary Hull, Peg Lieberman, Matt Sanders



Museum Volunteer Host Coordinator Diane Lindsay leads a group of Chester Elementary third graders on a treasure hunt of the museum's second floor exhibit.

Finances

The Robbie Collomore Music Series was founded as a part of the Chester Historical Society and maintains its own accounts dedicated to its activities. It is funded through ticket sales, advertising revenue, donations specific to the Music Series, and sponsorships for each performance. It is also supported by an endowment bequeathed some years ago by Burton Cornwall.

General operations for the rest of the Society organization are funded by three primary sources: membership dues, Annual Appeal with other donations, and fundraising events. Principal expenses for general operations include servicing our loan obligation, utilities, insurance, and accounting, general maintenance and supplies for exhibition, archival cataloging, and preservation.

The trustees were able to set aside \$3,000 in the second year of building a Major Maintenance Reserve Fund. Hurricane Sandy caused electrical damage due to falling tree limbs, a portion of which was covered by insurance. However, the general operations expenses and utilities were as expected overall. Annual Appeal participation and revenue exceeded last fiscal year. Three successful fundraising events, Antiques Appraisal Day, Bone Arts Challenge and a Meeting House Concert, enabled us to achieve our revenue targets.

The Society applies for and receives grants to be used for specific purposes. This year we received a grant from Essex Savings Bank to fund the Society newsletter. The Community Foundation of Middlesex Country also awarded a grant used to create the 2013 exhibit, *"Over the River and Through the Woods."*

Jill Jones, Treasurer

Operations Summary Fiscal YTD 6/1/12 - 5/25/13

The un-audited summary below reflects the annual operation of the Society, excluding the Robbie Collomore Music Series. At press time, the fiscal year had not yet closed. Final financials will be made available when completed. Our sole liability is \$62,500 in interest-bearing notes, which will be reduced to \$57,500 in July.

Working Balance 6/1/13 **\$7,734**

REVENUES

Dues & Donations	18,185
Fundraising	11,681
Museum admissions & sales	293
Grants	1,500
Misc	1,750
Total Operating Revenues	33,409

EXPENSES

Building Utilities	7,263
Building Maintenance & Operations	4,467
General Operations	8,109
Fundraising	1,713
Interest on Notes	2,879
Communications	1,343
Programs	123
Staff Training & Education	13
Museum Store Purchases	243
Transfer to Notes Retirement	4,000
Transfer to Maintenance Reserve	3,000
Total Operating Expenses	33,338

Working Balance 5/22/12 **\$7,805**
Annual Change in working balance **\$71**

Membership

The Society membership (see back page) continues to be strong, numbering 248 memberships representing approximately 410 members. We added nine new memberships to our rolls and processed eight membership level upgrades, five to the Benefactor level and three to the Life Membership level.

By level, we currently have 69 Life Members, 24 Benefactors, 100 Family and 55 Individuals.

We have received numerous compliments on the monthly e-newsletter Cary Hull initiated this year and distributes to all members (and some non-members) who have shared their email address. We encourage all members to participate. Other than the Society-associated Robbie Collomore Music Series, we do not share any email lists or addresses with other organizations.

Cheri Ferrari Habersang, chairperson

Robbie Collomore Music Series

The 39th Season of the Robbie Collomore Music Series was both an artistic and financial success. The first concert of the season was our annual Barbara and Edmund Delaney Young Artist Concert featuring baritone Timothy McDevitt, who also represented our annual concert in conjunction with the Juilliard School. The second concert of the fall season presented the renowned blues guitarist John Hammond. The turnout and enthusiasm for this performer was extraordinary as befitting a musical legend.

In the spring we presented the Parker String Quartet, who justified their reputation as one of the leading string quartets in the world with a moving and well-received performance. The last concert of the season was an opportunity to hear singer/songwriter Nellie McKay, whose performance off-Broadway had just been reviewed by the *New Yorker* magazine. Many of the wildly enthusiastic audience had come great distances to hear her perform and a number of people commented that this kind of presentation is what makes the Collomore Music Series unique among local concert series.

Cary Hull has been a marvel at increasing our public image through her PR work, and Michele Paulson's email pre-concert blasts have been well received, with many new people signing up to receive them.

The Cornwall Trust has shown steady continued growth, and we maintain it positioned in a somewhat more defensive posture because of regional financial instability in Europe.

Collomore Music Committee: Randy Allison, Ray Archambault, James Baker, Anne Easton, Andrea Ely, Karli Gilbertson, Donald Hanson, Rick Holloway, Doreen Joslow, Nikki Lindberg, Martin Nadel (chairperson), Bettie Perreault, Sue Saltus, and John Williams