



# TIMEPIECE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE MADISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
SERVING  
OLD BRIDGE TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

VOLUME 44 ISSUE 1    FEBRUARY - MARCH 2009  
\$2

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Historical Society Members,

As we begin this New Year with low frigid temperatures and light snow that turns to ice, we have some time to contemplate by the fire since meetings are out of the question while the parking lot remains frozen over! Perhaps we could each make a list of ideas of things that need to be taken care of and any new ideas we may have for programming and events! We do plan to have both a board meeting and a membership meeting in February, weather permitting. We will also be rescheduling the By-laws Committee meeting.

I would like to again thank everyone who contributed to the success of the first eight months of this board's term of office. We have accomplished much and although we did not get everything done, we should be proud of all the things we did accomplish. So many of you contributed to the success of the events and fundraisers that the list is too long to include everyone in this space. I would especially like to thank Carmella Barthine for all of her work with membership and Lynn Kosobucki for all of her hard work on the reworking of the by-laws.

On a daily basis, a few volunteers give very generously of themselves without being asked so I would like to thank Terry Amato-Norton for her steadfast devotion every Thursday and Friday as well as many event days in between. Many thanks to Alycia Rihacek who is committed to research and the history of Old Bridge and

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

**Regular Meetings:** Held the Third Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm, unless noted by asterisk (\*): February 17, \*March 24, April 21, May 19, June 16-ANNUAL PICNIC, \*July no meeting, August 18, \*September 22, October 20, November 17, \*December 5-ANNUAL LUNCHEON.

**Board of Directors Meetings:** Held the Second Monday of the month at 7:30pm, unless noted by asterisk (\*): February 9, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8, \*July no meeting, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, \*December - no meeting.

**Friends of the Thomas Warne Museum Meetings:** Held the Last Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm, unless noted by asterisk (\*): Feb. 25, March 25, April 29, May 27, June 24, July 29, August 26, September 30, October 28, November 25, \*December 16.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Special Meeting Dates, Additional Museum programs and Special Events will be announced in future TIMEPIECE newsletters and on the **Thomas Warne Museum** website. For more info call: 732-566-2108

email: [curator@thomas-warne-museum.com](mailto:curator@thomas-warne-museum.com)  
or check: [www.thomas-warne-museum.com](http://www.thomas-warne-museum.com)

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN...

Madison Township Historical Society  
Members, please remember to remit your  
\$15 membership dues by April 1, 2009.

Thanks!

## **Madison Township Historical Society**

**Serving Old Bridge Township, New Jersey**

**President, Nancy Parr Giamerese**  
**First Vice President, Patricia A. Schuck**  
**Second Vice President, Stuart J. Zelman**  
**Treasurer, Richard J. Kujawinski**  
**Recording Secretary, Joan M. Beamish**  
**Corresponding Secretary, Philip P. McGovern**  
**Director A (Term 2006-2009)**  
**Joan E. Gibson**  
**Director B (Term 2007-2010)**  
**Carol D. Kosobucki**  
**Director C (Term 2008-2011)**  
**Leona Murphy**  
**Museum Curator, David E. Johns**  
**Newsletter Editor, Wayne H. Clawans**

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

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is a frequent contributor on weekends and sometimes even on weekdays. Jenn Gibbons, a very new member, has actually been volunteering with us for a long time and lends us her expertise on the nature of the area. I would like to thank her also for her continuing commitment.

Last, but not least of the "thank you" for this issue is to Kate Philbrick who is employed by us for a few grant hours every week, but gives us much, much more! Kate's commitment is just part of her gift to us as she is a very creative display designer and an artist as well as a knowledgeable history buff and a researcher. She has helped motivate other volunteers and has an insatiable curiosity that is totally contagious! She and David have made presentations to other groups that give us great pride. Her background in working for the National Park Service and running an antique shop make her a unique addition to our very small staff and a valuable and irreplaceable volunteer!

Our biggest challenges for 2009: Identity in the community. Finances, of course, with fund development in mind. Expansion of membership. Preservation of our artifacts. The widening of Route 516.

Ann Miller and I met with the township attorney to discuss access needed by the county road department for widening of Route 516 and discovered that our deeds, maps, and surveys need updating and verification. The board will be discussing what we need to do before the

widening begins to protect our property claim in the future.

As a final note, I would like to point out to all of you how much Old Bridge is a part of the daily history of the area. I don't think many people were aware that an ambulance from Old Bridge stood by as part of the disaster call that went out on Thursday, January 15, the day US Airways Flight 1549 from La Guardia became known as the Miracle on the Hudson. The volunteers from Old Bridge stood by in a staging area with other Middlesex County ambulance squads to assist the 155 passengers and crew members who were floating down the Hudson on the wings of an Airbus! By an amazing act of God, they were not needed and all 155 very scared people were miraculously rescued with minimal trauma! May 2009 give us more miracles like this one!

Wishing you Blessings for the New Year,  
Nancy Parr Giamerese  
President



## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

Another year has come and gone. And thus we begin a new volume of the *TimePiece*. Welcome to Issue One of Volume Forty-Four.

In the publishing/library science world, a periodical (newspaper, magazine, newsletter, etc.) is an open ended omnibus. Something like a large book that is being continuously added to at regular intervals (or **issued periodically**), then bound together into volumes (also at regular intervals) for later ease of reference. Some periodicals have lasted for centuries, and others barely get out a second issue. Our own *TimePiece* has just begun it's 44th year of publication. That's pretty good, in my opinion.

Again, thank you and please keep those articles, photos and other submissions coming! Send them to [TimePieceNews@aol.com](mailto:TimePieceNews@aol.com) with "Article Submission" in the subject line.

The **FIRM DEADLINE** for all articles and regular column submissions for the next issue (April-May 2009) is:

**THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009**

# AT THE MUSEUM

David Johns, Curator, Thomas Warne Museum

Greetings from the Thomas Warne Museum where the excitement never stops! It feels like it was just yesterday that we were trick-or-treating, carving turkey and then “decking the halls”. The Ragtime Christmas program was a blast for those who attended and for those who couldn’t make it we all had a cup of cheer and saved you some fruitcake. You can pick it up at your earliest convenience... if we don’t eat it first! Congratulations to our door prize winners and many thanks to all who donated prizes. Ho, Ho, Ho!

2009 has begun with some exciting news! Donations of all and sundry have been flooding in, through the kindness of the following members and friends. Long time Society member, David Engebretson, always generous with his time and knowledge, has donated items made from cotton feed bags circa 1930s and several colorfully patterned feed bags as well as a fabulous 1940s reciprocating saw, in the names of Francis Burlew and Dorothy Engebretson, respectively. Reverend Monsignor John B. Szymanski has kindly added to our collection two of his books, *Lighting of the Watch Fires*, and *Towards New Horizons*, which chronicle the history of the Roman Catholic community of Old Bridge and the Diocese of Metuchen.

We have also received several books from Jacqueline P. Gerth, entitled *New Jersey Family Index, Middlesex County Heirs to Estates 1780 to 1870, The New Jersey Browns, Notices from New Jersey Newspapers 1781 to 1790, Records of NJ Volume 1*, and *Thirty Thousand Names of Immigrants in Pennsylvania*. Most recently, Richard W. Lumbreyer has graciously provided, on indefinite loan, several edged weapons from the 19th century, including bayonets, cutlasses, scimitars and a cavalry sabre, as well as a small seven shot revolver, a 19th century trimming axe, several great antique books, and a box of vintage cast iron toys. And let’s not forget Jessica Schoeffler, whose visits often bring us unexpected treasures, such as vintage textiles and books. Many thanks to all our generous donors and apologies if we have forgotten anyone!

Congratulations to long time volunteer and part time museum employee Kate Philbrick for her recent appointment to the Old Bridge Twp. Historic

Preservation Commission. She joins several other Society members already serving. Good luck!

We have recently been contacted by Joseph Noll of Grassy Noll Productions and Old Bridge TV 14, who has proposed a series of programs featuring the museum and the area’s history. It has been suggested that we start with our driving tour map, and go from there. Several of us have been meeting with Mr. Noll and his staff, and are still blocking out the show. Needless to say, we’re all pretty excited about it!

For the last year, Boy Scout Nicholas Rojeuski has been working on his Eagle Scout project through the Thomas Warne Museum and Madison Township Historical Society. He plans to repair and restore the old Baptist cemetery on route 34, with particular attention to the fence and grounds. He is currently organizing and conducting fundraisers in order to cover estimated expenses exceeding \$2,000. Recently, during the Klondike Derby at Thompson Park, his troop ran a food concession selling soup to warm the participants. He is looking for further fundraising opportunities, and so if anyone has ideas or would care to donate to “the cause” please contact the museum and we will put you in touch with him.

Recent visitors to the museum—despite the snow—have been interested in doing research, and excited at discovering our collection and resources. We would also like to extend an invitation to all our members to visit us soon and see some of the changes and new exhibits.

Until next issue, remember “You are history in the making!”



## HISTORIC TIDBITS

In the Victorian era it was fashionable to paint window shades with ornamental designs. Either a local artist would be hired or an artistic family member would decorate the shade with landscapes, medieval knights, still lifes, beautiful ladies, etc. These shades would not only serve as an artful accent to the room, but provide an added bit of insulation to the window. In tribute to this custom, for December's Holiday celebration, Thomas Warne Museum volunteers hung paper shades in some of

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# FOOD DRIVE UPDATE

*Kate Philbrick*

First, a big THANK YOU to all our friends who have been so generous over the holiday season in bringing canned goods and non-perishable foodstuffs to the museum. All items collected have been donated to the Old Bridge Food Pantry, and it is rewarding to know that even though the news talks of economic woes, the people of Old Bridge can still extend kindness to those less fortunate. With the holidays over, many donations to such support groups as food pantries often dwindle-- the spirit of giving is never so strong as during Thanksgiving, and Christmas. However, the need for people to feed their families is always present, and for this reason, we think it would be a good idea to continue our food drive. We hope we can count on our members and their friends to continue dropping off a few canned goods from time to time, to help fill the red baskets provided at the museum. An extra dollar or two spent while shopping for your own family's groceries go a very long way in fighting the hunger felt by members of our community. Helping those close to home can help the world! Thanks in advance for your kind continued support!!



## CLASSIC CONCERT IN HISTORIC HALL

On February 28, 2009, 4:30-7:00pm, *The Women's Club of Matawan*, NJ will present *The D-Major Singers*, performing "**Ballads of our Past**", a selection of songs of the common people of rural Colonial America. The four Monmouth County natives breath new life into these tunes and ballads of love, farming, drinking, and lust (few of which have survived to this day). There will be a tavern style buffet featuring ham, turkey, breads, cheese, puddings, draft beer, and cider. Tickets are \$35 per person and should be purchased in advance. For more info, please call Ann Quinn at 732-290-3169. Note: some songs may not be suitable for young children.

The *D-Major Singers* formed in the mid-1980s and specialize in songs of colonial New Jersey in the 1700s. For more info: <http://mysite.verizon.net/dmajorsing>

*The Women's Club of Matawan* is at 199 Jackson St., Matawan, NJ 07747, near Church St., just one block west of Main St. (Route 79).

# In Memory of "Bob" (Robert) Green

*Alvia Martin*

A Renaissance man-

An Artist and Draftsman.

A History Buff and Researcher.

A self taught musician and organist.

A gourmet cook - turtle soup etc.

A Botanist - knew every plant, tree, berry, nut, insect and animal along Waterworks Road, Old Bridge Area.

A Environmentalist for his area along the South River, every foundation, dams, old roads, Railroad tracks and structures of old business and history of his area-

Antique and Art buff.

Master of Calligraphy.

A good friend and donor to the Thomas Warne Museum for many years.

A person to remember.



In the OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2008 issue of the TIMEPIECE, Alycia Rihacek wrote a fascinating perspective piece in tribute to the late Robert Evans Green who had passed away in December of 2007. If you missed it, I sincerely recommend you go back and read the article. Mr. Green was an (apparently) amateur local researcher, historian, naturalist, conservationist, and cartographer. He might have been affectionately described as a "local eccentric character" in an earlier time before the homogenizing of the late 20th Century made such people unfashionable. In closing her article, Alycia asked her readers to please send in any additional information they might have on this gentleman. The above poem was submitted by Thomas Warne Museum Curator Emeritus Alvia Martin.

--EDITOR

# THE MUD ROOM

## Where you get the Dirt

*Kate Philbrick*

Perhaps a word about mud rooms? Applying it to the Cedar Grove school, that's the little foyer at the front door. Local farmhouses had them, too-- maybe some of our members live in houses with mud rooms-- or remember them from childhood. We'd like to hear from you, and what your families kept there and used them for, besides the obvious!

Now-- to the dirt!

Rumor has it that you may be seeing the museum featured on local TV in 2009! A gentleman connected with channel 14 visited our tables at the Middlesex County Fair last year and picked up one of our driving tour flyers. While we are hoping to update and fine-tune these hand-outs, he came up with the idea of presenting some local sites in a program or two. Very preliminary at the moment, but would certainly afford great exposure for the museum and Historical Society. We will keep you posted. Positive proof that networking works!!

The colder months traditionally call a halt to bottle and dump digging-- that is, the amateur archeology as reported in a previous Timepiece issue. Frozen ground, frigid temps, and hazardous conditions make successful searching and digging impossible. Artifacts that might be recovered can easily be broken or lost in these conditions, and the best "hunting" is done in spring and fall, when there is less ground cover and the soil easier to dig. Also, the likelihood of damage to items retrieved is minimal. So, our background archaeologists have nothing to report this time around-- however we would like to put out a call to our members!!

Do you remember a dump site on a farm years ago? That's the place where glass, bottles, china and other trash from the household was "dumped"-- often in a pit or ravine. Do you remember a shed or building, no longer there, but operating as a home or business 50 years ago? Or perhaps an old privy pit on the property where you live? Let us know! Drop a note, or make a call to the museum, attention David or Kate, and perhaps

you can help us locate some "treasures" that help tell the story of Madison Township, and its residents of the past!

HOLY MOLY!! Look for some great news-- and hopefully a program soon at the museum, featuring some startling finds from the Bushnell collection. As you may or may not know, we received several boxes of papers and diaries from the estate of long time Historical Society supporter Mr. Bushnell. The noble efforts of Alycia-- our one-woman research team!-- have unearthed a wealth of information and irreplaceable papers dating back to the 18th century! Now more than ever we need to update our archival supplies, to properly care for and preserve our collection for the years to come. Keep your eyes peeled for updates!

Plans are in the works for a special exhibit at the museum, concerning the natural history of the area. I don't want to give away too many clues, but just a whisper that it will be something new, designed and presented by one of more actively involved volunteers and Museum Friends, and is not to be missed!

Museum and LIBRARY! With calls and letters, and visitors from far places seeking us out for historic and genealogical information, a lot of activity and interest has been focused of late on our research resources. To this end, you will find the schoolhouse presently set with tables and lamps in place of the old school desks. Fear not-- we will still be displaying the schoolhouse as a school several months a year, but to facilitate research, and those people who visit us for our printed resources, we have set up the school house at least temporarily as a reference library. It has proven successful, as in the past there really was no place to open a map, browse a few files and binders, and take notes. We hope you may take advantage of this for your own local studies, and always keep in mind that our library computer provides access to Ancestry.com, an invaluable on-line source of information. Unfamiliar with computers? Not a problem! We can sit down with you and help you track down what you need to find. Check us out!

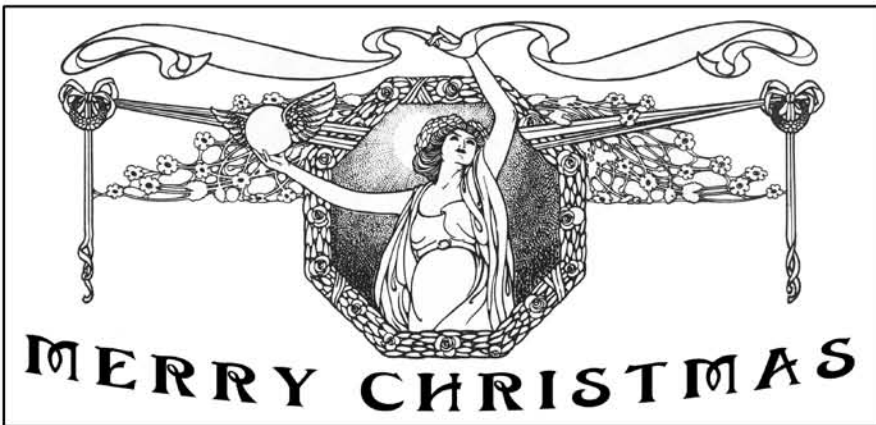
What's in the mud room next issue? Part of that is up to you!

**HISTORIC TIDBITS**

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the windows of the museum's main gallery with designs on them based on popular and advertising artwork of the late 19th century (Art Nouveau period). Those three designs are reproduced here.

If you'd like to see the originals, they are still hanging in the museum, and will remain up through the end of the colder weather. Those Victorians knew their stuff! The shades have significantly cut down on the chill we used to feel near the bay windows in the winter.



**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Attention Members: Please refer any membership inquiries and submit any address/phone number changes to our Membership Committee Chair

Carmela Barthine

732-566-2902

membership@madison-twp-history.org

**SUNSHINE CORNER**

On February 22 longtime member

**Howard Drake**

will celebrate his 90th Birthday!

Let us all join in wishing Howard a very

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

and many, many, many happy returns!



The Madison Township Historical Society has welcomed three new members since November:

*Old Bridge Township Councilman  
Reggie Butler*

*Hans Kernast*

*Mary L. Munn*

Attention Members: Please notify our Sunshine Committee Chair

Terry Amato Norton or the Museum (where Terry can often be found volunteering) about members and friends of the Museum/Society who should be included in our Sunshine Corner.

Terry Amato Norton: 732-254-8968

MUSEUM: 732-566-2108



# Halloween Live Broadcast with WRSU-FM, October 30

Jen Gibbons, Photographer



## Ragtime Christmas

DECEMBER 13 & 14



# THOMAS WARNE MUSEUM ET LIBRARY

Conveniently located on Route 516 across from the Old Bridge High School

• **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** •

**Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 12NOON to 6PM**

**Saturday & Sunday: 12NOON to 8PM**

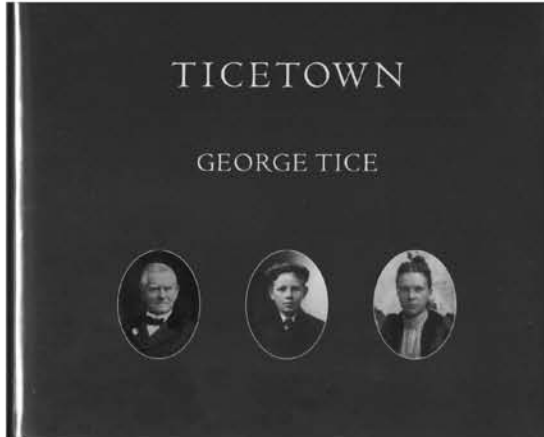
The *Thomas Warne Museum & Library* is operated by the *Madison Township Historical Society*, serving the Old Bridge Township, New Jersey community.

[www.thomas-warne-museum.com](http://www.thomas-warne-museum.com)

PHONE 732-566-2108

FAX 732-566-6943

While You're  
There...Stop By The  
THOMAS WARNE MUSEUM  
*Gift Shop*



Copies of the Regular Hard Cover Edition of *Ticetown*, by (*Madison Township Historical Society* member and) world famous photographer **George Tice**, are available at the gift shop of the Thomas Warne Museum, \$60. Makes a great gift.

MADISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
4216 Route 516  
Matawan, NJ 07747

