



The Official Newsletter of the  
Madison Township Historical Society  
Serving Old Bridge Township

# Timepiece

Volume 46, Issue 1  
January-February-March 2012

## President's Message—Alycia E. Rihacek

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Salutations and Happy New Year! The Society is proud to announce that the results of our conservative budget expenditures for the year of 2011 are the best we have seen. We are pleased with the outstanding teamwork and determination by our members to assist the organization and museum in maintaining the budget while the economy has caused many to cutback on donations to cultural institutions like our own.

There are still many challenges and long-range facility maintenance and organizational goals that need to be addressed. On the positive side we have been able to raise the money to rectify the pressing issues. The exterior of the School House received a fresh coat of paint, our electrical issues have also been rectified and we now have a light to illuminate our parking lot.

Long-term goals need to be addressed. The cedar shake roof of the schoolhouse is starting to show its age under heavy downpours, and through the generosity of Owen Henry Contracting, we have patched a section. However, in the near future we will need a new roof, and we would prefer to start raising funds now for what may become a costly expenditure. Likewise, our energy efficiency concerning the HV/AC and the windows of the schoolhouse needs to be addressed. The Board is investigating options; if you would like to help us with these issues, recommend contractors or funding and grant assistance, please contact us. The Schoolhouse contains our precious reference library and genealogical archives, so we must protect this part of our facility.

Please read the article inside on recent changes to the by-laws approved by the board and by the general membership. These are primarily clarifications of the membership categories, as well as a change to the due date for renewal of membership.

To all our members and friends of the Society, may this year be filled with renewed optimism and team spirit to see our organization thrive. Thank you again for the opportunity to be a part of a great family that is the Madison Township Historical Society.

*Membership  
Renewals  
Due by April 1st*

## MEETING CALENDAR

- *Regular Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm unless otherwise noted. Upcoming meetings: February 21st, March 20th, April 17th.*
- *Board of Directors Meetings: 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted. Upcoming meetings: February 13th, March 12th, April 9th*

## MADISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### OFFICERS

President, Alycia E. Rihacek  
1st Vice-President, Patricia A. Schuck  
2nd Vice-President, Jack Becker  
Recording Secretary, Joan M. Beamish  
Corresponding Secretary, David Johns  
Treasurer, Richard J. Kujawinski

Director A, Leona Murphy  
Director B, Pauline Drake  
Director C, Carmela Barthine

Museum Curator,  
Kathleen M. Philbrick

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Masthead image:  
Gingerbread Mantle Clock  
Connecticut origin, Steam-Pressed Oak  
Circa early 1900s  
Accession number 6  
Donated by: Mr. J. Maley

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## What is It—Help Solve the Mystery!

Recently acquired: A fancy pink Victorian bowl with handles, decorated with cherubs and maybe a Goddess or two, and gold trim. The bowl was made by Imperial Works, Stoke on Trent, England, a company in business in the 1890s. In less than perfect shape, it has a certain charm. There are perforations on each side at the top, and this has us stymied. Come have a look at this curious piece and see if you can solve our mystery!

## Curator's Notes—Kate Philbrick

Welcome all-- it's been awhile!

Winter has been pretty kind to us this year. We've seen a fairly steady flow of visitors here at the museum. Folks often come in to do specific research on local history or genealogy. There are always individuals or families coming to visit for the first time.

Remember, the Thomas Warne Museum is the official public face of the Madison Township Historical Society and I am delighted to say some of these first time visitors have become members on the spot.

What's new at the museum? Our Christmas decorating was a success though we didn't go all out for the Dickensian Street décor as done in the past-- to the disappointment of some. No fear, it'll be back next year! Meanwhile, we hope you had a chance to see this year's display. Our mourning exhibit is still up but will 'pass away' soon, in favor of something completely different.... Dolls!

Member Linda McGovern has kindly volunteered to fill some of our display cases with treasured pieces of her doll collection. These will be on view for the Children's Tea on Saturday, February 18, and will run for several weeks, so by all means come out and share the memories. Don't forget our plans for a wedding gown exhibit coming this spring!

Looking for a little something different to do on your weekend? We always welcome visits from members, and are blessed to have so many 'regulars' drop by on Saturdays and Sundays for some socializing. We are going to be ushering in 'Curator Sundays', too-- informal talks one Sunday a month, featuring articles in our collection, or interesting and obscure subjects pertaining to local history. I hear there may even be refreshments. Please call the museum and we'll let you know when the next event will be.

Over the last few months, the museum has played host to several scout troops. These and other special tours have been arranged and conducted by vice president Patricia Schuck. Hats off!

We are fortunate to have several volunteers actively tackling new and different projects at the museum and beyond-- from organizing our slightly disorganized filing system, to photographing parts of our collection, and local graveyards. Stay tuned for more details on our progress and how YOU can get involved, too!



In the meantime, why not stop by and say hello?

## Organizational Commitment: Review of By-Laws—Alycia Rihacek

At first this many seem like a daunting task, but every organization needs to review its' constitutional organization to remain relevant within the changing economy and professional and ethical practices. The first issue of the By-law committee was to codify the yearly dues and wording to clarify for all of our members.

The following changes were adopted after two readings during our General Membership meetings in 2011, as per Robert's Rules of Order.

### Article I, subheading Membership and Dues

**Regular:** \$15.00 per year. Defined as one person.

**Family:** \$25.00 per year. Defined, as "Family equals two adults plus children living in one household".

**Student:** \$10.00 per year. (Definition to remain the same: "A full time student attending a private, public or parochial school in any grade.").

**Honorary:** No Dues (Definition remains the same: "Any person, institution, business, firm, corporation, agency, association, society, organization, firm or other entity can be given Honorary Membership for any extraordinary service or contribution to the advancement of the Madison Township Historical Society. Conferring the title of Honorary Membership requires the majority vote of the officers and the directors of the Society. The conferring of Honorary Membership shall be at a special membership meeting, where a certificate shall be presented by the President to the recipient.").

**Life:** \$150.00 onetime payment (Definition remains the same: "Life Membership shall be available to any person, organization, institution, business firm, corporation, agency, association, society, organization, firm or other entity.").

**Corporate/Business:** \$50.00 per year (Definition remains the same:" Any for-profit organization, business, corporation, bank, legal firm, association, or other business entity").

### Addendum to By-Law Article I, Sect. 1.

#### Dues Payment Date:

To be paid in person by the March general membership meeting. If paid by mail to be post marked on or before April 1<sup>st</sup>, in order to vote at the general election and installation in April.

### Summary of Changes

You may notice that the above just about looks the same as the 2007 By-Laws. *Institutional Membership* definition and dues have been removed since the original By-Laws classified this category as the same monetary amount as Regular Membership.

We have clarified the *Family Membership* definition, and lastly have updated the deadline for renewal dues to ease the prior confusion (and inundation of last minute renewals to our membership committee chair) surrounding the *payment of dues* date for participation in our elections. We believe that these simple changes will please everyone and make Joan Gibson's work as Membership chair a little bit easier.

*In Memoriam.*

**Ellen M. McDermott**

Oct. 11, 1938—Jan. 28, 2012

The members of the Madison Township Historical Society are deeply saddened by the news of Ellen McDermott's passing. Ellie's contributions to the children and residents of the Township of Old Bridge are immeasurable. She was the cornerstone of community service... A woman of great spirit, wisdom and compassion. Always giving. Always helpful. An angel to all who knew her. Her humble dedication and service to the community, as well as her support for the Society and the Thomas Warne Museum will be greatly missed.

**Theresa**

**Amato-Norton**

Oct. 6, 1943—Jan. 31, 2012

With great sorrow, we mourn the passing of our "Sunshine Committee Leader" Theresa Amato-Norton. "Mama T", as she was known to some of us, was a dedicated volunteer here at the Thomas Warne Museum. Her duties as "phone girl" and her ever jovial optimism, camaraderie, and promotion of the Society will be greatly missed.

**We Dig Fossils—Kate Philbrick**

As your curator, I have observed that the responses and interest level of visitors always varies. Everyone, every tour, is different. Some folks are most interested in the schoolhouse, others in the military display and still others love sharing their personal memories conjured up by a particular item or two. However, almost without fail, folks will take a special interest in our fossil display.

It is one of the first displays encountered on entering the museum and one often revisited in the course of a tour. In case you don't recall or have not seen it, it contains fossils retrieved by our own members (myself included) from the Big Brook Preserve located in Marlboro and Colts Neck. Information about this site is easy to find on line, where photos of the terrain and artifacts found there are posted. It is a popular place for school groups, families, scouts, even Universities and accomplished fossil hunters to enjoy a successful outing. By this I mean it is difficult to spend time there without finding something.

The site is known for its artifacts dating from the Cretaceous period-- basically 65 million years ago. Shells, belemnites (portions of fossilized squid) and shark teeth are most frequently found, though we have also found bones, fossil snails and other forms of ancient sea life. Keep in mind, the lower half of NJ (think of the area now covered by the Pine Barrens) was all under the ocean at one time. As the shoreline receded, large saltwater pools and lakes formed, trapping these prehistoric creatures who eventually died and whose remains became the fossils we find today.



Visitors often ask if they can hunt for fossils themselves, or join us when we plan a trip in the warmer months. Big Brook is open to the public, and provided the rules are followed, there is no reason a family or individual cannot launch their own 'expedition'. Again, the on-line sites can provide information as to the best way to start this fun and rewarding hobby.

Why such interest in our display, or the subject of fossils? Dinosaurs have always been intriguing, especially to children. Movies with state of the art special effects are responsible in part for bringing these creatures alive, and perhaps the romance of actually discovering a bona fide prehistoric or ancient artifact speaks to the Indiana Jones in us all. Maybe it is a sense of adventure missing from the malls, video games, and the internet, but it just may be the thrill of discovery and holding in your hand a piece of New Jersey pre-history.

The museum display, which also shows some equipment and photos of a hunt in progress, was arranged and assembled by volunteer Jen Gibbons, our natural history specialist.

## Notes from Recent Membership Meetings:

The Apple Festival was a great success—the pies were delicious (thank you to the piemaking volunteers), attendance was good, and we made a fair profit.

The Christmas Luncheon at the Buttonwood was well-attended and enjoyed by all. If you didn't make it this year, you missed a great time—try to join us next year.

Several groups toured the museum recently—if you know of a group who would enjoy visiting, group tours are available by appointment.

Volunteers are always needed. Generally at least two people are “on duty” on Friday afternoons. Great chance to learn a little more about the museum, catch up on a little paperwork or craft project, spend some time getting to know other members. Contact Pat Schuck if you are available for a few hours.

Members who sew are meeting to prepare favors for “Tea with Mrs. Lincoln” and to make covers to dress up our folding chairs for various events. Again, contact Pat Schuck if you can help out.

Not to be missed: Kate Philbrick will be presenting “Curator Sundays” - short (1/2 hour) talks on items in the museum, interesting local history, etc. The first talk (in January) was on “Gravestone Art”, the meaning of various symbols found on tombstones, illustrated with examples she has photographed in New Jersey cemeteries. The next talk will be in February.

There will be a doll display to coordinate with the Children's Tea in February. Much anticipated is the Wedding Gown display planned for May/June.

### Upcoming general membership meetings:

**February 21st (weather permitting)**

**March 20th**

**April 17th**

**Save the date**

**Annual Golf**

**Outing**

**May 17th**



*Tea with  
Mrs. Lincoln  
April 14th*



This program is made possible by

**Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders**

**Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission**

with funding in part from

**New Jersey Historical Commission**

a Division in the Dept of State



## Membership News—Alycia Rihacek

### Cleaning out the barn?

### Rummaging

### in the basement?

### Emptying the garage?

Don't throw it out!! The museum is always looking for new additions to our collection.

It may not look like much to you-- a local map from 1960, a crossing guard's hat, some old postcards or political pins-- but we'd like to ask our readers to consider dropping off your items to the museum.

We are always looking for item donations, in our quest for preserving local history, as well as NJ and US history in general. You can bring items in, any time we are open, Fridays 12-4 or Saturdays and Sundays 12-6. Or even bring them to a membership meeting!

Too much stuff or too much trouble? We can arrange to pick items up if necessary, just call!

Please share this info with any neighbors who are ready to move or are cleaning house.

Your help with our growth is definitely appreciated!

### Special Thanks

All of our volunteers are exceptional in their dedication to the Society. I would be remiss if I didn't point out the fantastic work our first vice president Patricia Schuck continues to do for us. Not only is she able to energize and organize our volunteer group for any task, from our Teas to our annual Apple Fest, but in addition, Pat's outstanding work with school and group tours is a wonderful blessing and receiving many accolades. Pat is always looking for more members to join in the fun and volunteer for our up in coming events. You may have a skill or talent that could be beneficial to us, and Pat is more than gracious to share her knowledge with anyone who wishes to join our merry band of volunteers.

### Members of note!

You may notice the format of this newsletter has changed once again. I would like to introduce to you Deb Stanley... she has stepped up to the task to help us get our newsletter out to you again. She has volunteered her services as editor, and we are most appreciative. Deb is also an outstanding seamstress and quilter. You may have seen some of her work at our Gift Shop stand during the Apple Fest.

Deb has also offered her assistance to our curator Kate Philbrick to compile, review and update the catalogue of our genealogical archive and general research files. Brea Saunders will also help in this endeavor. Thank you, ladies!

I would also like to welcome the Dennison Family to our group, Casey and his mother Carol, are a welcome addition in our volunteer group. Casey was so kind to photograph our Christmas Luncheon for us. After meeting with another member of note, Mayor Owen Henry, Casey was given the opportunity to be the official photographer at the Old Bridge Township reorganization meeting. Great Work, Casey!

Chris Zawistowski, reporter for Greater Media Newspapers (Suburban), received honors from the New Jersey Managers Association. We have just been informed that Chris is moving up in the world of journalism, he has landed a position with CBS News. Congratulations, Chris!

Kate Philbrick, our fearless Curator, continues to work diligently to curate exhibitions, work on the much-needed archival projects and now host Curator Sundays once a month. Kudos to Kate & David Johns, we have received another Staffing Grant from the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

# *Madison Township Historical Society Meeting Schedule*

## **2012**

**Regular Meetings:** at 7:00pm (Held the 3rd Tuesday of the Month unless otherwise noted)

- January 17th
- February 21st
- March 20th
- April 17th
- May 15th
- June 19th—picnic
- July/August—no meetings
- September 18th
- October 18th—  
Founder’s Day
- November 20th
- December Luncheon

**Board of Directors:** at 7:30pm (Held the 2nd Monday of the Month unless otherwise noted)

- January 9th
- February 13th
- March 12th
- April 9th
- May 14th
- June 11th
- July 9th
- August 13th
- September 10th
- October 8th
- November 12th
- December 10th

## *Madison Township Historical Society*

### **2012 Membership Form**

Regular annual membership dues for the year 2012 in the Madison Township Historical Society (MTHS) are \$15 per person.

**Dues are due by April 1st, 2012.**

To renew or apply for a new membership, please complete this form and make payment in person at the Thomas Warne Museum or mail this complete form along with check or money order (Please Do Not Mail Cash) made payable to:

**Madison Township Historical Society**—(memo note: *“Membership”*)

*Mail to:*

**Membership Committee**  
**Madison Township Historical Society**  
**4216 Route 516**  
**Matawan, NJ 07747**



*Please Print*

Check One

- 2012 Renewal
- New Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive your Newsletter via Email?      Yes    No

Would you like to be a MTHS Committee Volunteer?      Yes    No

Would you like to be a Museum Volunteer?      Yes    No

For Office Use:

Cash

Check/MO#

AMOUNT PAID

RECEIPT



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# Thomas Warne Museum & Library



“The Little Red School House”  
across from the Old Bridge  
Township High School Complex.

We welcome all questions and  
information pertaining to local  
family genealogy, township  
history, historic buildings and  
archeological findings.

Community groups and school  
tours available by appointment.

Home of the  
Madison Township Historical Society,  
serving Old Bridge Township.

**Open to the Public**  
**Fridays—Noon-4PM**  
**Saturday & Sunday Noon-6PM**

PHONE: 732-566-2108

FAX: 732-566-6943

Visit Our Web Site

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

and Join Us on Facebook

**Madison Township Historical Society**

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