

CHEQUAQUET LOG

The Newsletter of the Centerville Historical Museum
www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.org



C O M I N G E V E N T

OCTOBERFEST FEAST

A popular event, the Ocktoberfest dinner will be held **Saturday, September 7th** at the museum. Sue Lewsen, the chef, is again in charge. Her delicious food choices will feature schnitzel as the main course, with spaetzle and cucumber salad sides, appetizers and a luscious Black Forest cake for dessert. Yum! German beer and wine will also be available.

Sue, a retired nurse who served in Germany for many years and learned the merits of its food, belongs to the German-American Club of Cape Cod. Usually, she makes the meals, all with a German flair, for the members of the club. The secret to her Black Forest, is easy preparation. Called a “dump cake,” all ingredients are put in a baking pan and “it makes itself.”



Sue hopes this year’s dinner will be as successful as last year. The authentic food along with the popular Cape Cod Bavarian Band will all insure a successful evening for everyone.

For a pleasant evening, an authentic German meal and that lively band, come, taste and dance at the museum on September 7th, \$45 members / \$55 nonmembers.

A CELEBRATION OF THE ORDINARY

New Centerville museum member, Jane Hattemer-Stringer will present her one-woman performance **“A Celebration of the Ordinary” at the museum at 7 pm on September 13th.**

Authored by Hattemer-Stringer and performed by her, this biographical family insight has two parts. The first playlet, “In the Middle of the Middles,” Jane describes her childhood as the middle child, the one who gets all the aches, ignored by her parents as they cater to her older and younger siblings, but also surrounded by a large family.

The second playlet deals with Jane’s grandmother, whom Jane adored as a child and who wrote this memoir feeling that it gives her grandmother due diligence. This work is named, “Muddie, My Grandmother with the Cracker Crumbs on her Shoulders.”

The evening’s performance, without props, scenery or costumes promises to combine a mix of comedy, drama and biographical insights with the author and her audience.



Admission is \$7.00 for Centerville Historical Museum members, \$10.00 for non-members. Enjoy an all-in-one evening dramatic and endearing rendering with local playwright and author Jane Hattemer-Stringer.

NEW EXHIBIT

HOW CAN SOMETHING BE SO CHARMING? COME SEE

On the second floor of the Mary Lincoln home, which lately had been the master bedroom, a new rendering of a little girl's room is a real discovery.

Lovingly and stylishly put together by volunteer Joyce Canniff, this room of Victorian children's possessions will make mothers and grandmothers croon with happiness. Little girls will find the most interesting things to look at. They will notice the high button shoes and compare them to their sneakers. Perhaps the children will see the mannequins are in dresses and not in shorts or T-shirts. Perhaps, too, they will notice more sober colors and clothes made from cotton and wool rather than the thread blends of today.

The pristine underclothes spread on the bed are beautiful. Alongside them are the bed's key for tightening bed ropes and there is also a wooden paddle called a spooner for smoothing feather mattresses. On the wall is a sweet cross-stitched child's sampler. By the bed is a large chair for a parent, just right for reading a story. A bride doll sits there, her angelic porcelain face and gown quite elegant. Other well-dressed dolls with lovely faces are positioned around the room, each face a delicate porcelain.



Along the outside wall sit a commode and a chest of drawers in the cottage style, their pulls delicately carved in a fruit design. A little girl wearing a pinafore, popular for many years, even into the 1940's, looks out the window, wistfully wondering if she can visit Hallett's Variety Store and perhaps buy a bag of candy to share with her sister or playmates.



The bed is small and narrow and covered with a colorful quilt. This type of bed is a borning bed, used by mother and baby after the newborn's birth. Two Turkish rugs grace the wood floor and a child's small washstand sits just to the left of the bedroom's door. There is an enchanting row of doll clothes by the wall. They are precious. This showing reflects the days when daughters were dressed similarly to their mothers and their styles were faithfully rendered in tiny copies for child's play.

It is perfectly acceptable to ogle and smile at this imaginative slice of history, with examples displayed dating from 1860 through 1920. All who view this small and mostly Victorian showcase will be fascinated. The

bed is small and narrow and covered in a quilted spread. A Turkish rug graces the wood floor and a small washstand is in place by the door. There is an enchanting row of doll clothes by the wall. They are precious. These were the days when daughters dressed similarly to their mothers and their styles were beautifully rendered.

MUSEUM MATINEE MOVIES

The Centerville Historical Museum's fall 2019 film series feature films produced or about the time 'Between the Wars'. Shows are at 1:00 p.m., Saturdays, except Halloween feature films. Admission is free. (Donations gladly accepted.) After-film discussion with film critic Anthony Ambrogio is included.

2019 September to November Program

Double feature

The Lost Squadron (1932) & Heroes for Sale (1933) Saturday, September 14, 1PM
Three Comrades (1938) Saturday, September 21, 1PM
Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day (2008) Saturday, September 28, 1PM
Their Finest (2016) Saturday, October 12, 1PM
Mrs. Henderson Presents (2005) Saturday, October 19, 1PM
The Roaring Twenties (1939) Saturday, October 26, 1PM

Halloween Double feature

October 31: Special Thursday showing for our annual Halloween film
Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein (1948), & The Changeling (1980), Thursday, October 31, 1PM
The Mortal Storm (1940) Saturday, November 2, 1PM
All Through the Night (1942) Saturday, November 9, 1PM
Casablanca (1943) Saturday, November 16, 1PM
Remember the Night (1940) Saturday, November 30, 1PM

September 14: Double feature

The Lost Squadron (1932) 79m.

After the Great War, three aviation vets (Richard Dix, Robert Armstrong, Joel McCrea) get jobs as stunt pilots and sort of fight the war all over again because of dictatorial German director Von Furst (Eric Von Stroheim). With Mary Astor.

Heroes for Sale (1933) 76m.

Principled Tom Holmes (Richard Barthelmass) has more than his share of bad luck. His war heroics earn fame and glory for someone else, and he becomes addicted to morphine as a result of his war wounds, which costs him a job and his home-town reputation. After months in a clinic, he goes to Chicago and succeeds at work, but his labor-saving invention is misunderstood, leading to loss of life and his unjust imprisonment. Out on the streets in the Depression, he must face local "red squads" and vigilante groups hassling jobless men. (With Loretta Young and Aline MacMahon.)

September 21:

Three Comrades (1938) 98m.

Based on the novel of the same name by Eric Maria Remarque, the man who wrote All Quiet on the Western Front, and the only feature film for which writer F. Scott Fitzgerald (author of The Great Gatsby) received onscreen credit, this romance details the trials and tribulations of three German vets of the Great War and what they face in their country afterward. Starring Margaret Sullavan, Robert Taylor, Robert Young, and Franchot Tone.

September 28:

Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day (2008) 92m.

A day in the life of a London governess (Frances McDormand), unfairly fired from her job, who ends up as the companion to a flamboyant, ditzzy American actress (Amy Adams) as Britain sits on the edge of World War II.



The Lost Squadron



Heros For Sale

V O L U N T E E R I N G

GWEN BROWN-A COMMITTED BOARD MEMBER

Centerville Historical Museum's Board Members, all twelve of them, are proving to be a busy and talented lot. In this issue of the Newsletter, we meet Gwen Brown, Board Secretary. She volunteers for most events and projects as well as being on the Collections Committee and chairing the seven member Education Committee. Gwen is a "doer" who sets worthy goals, then proceeds to fulfill them. Gwen's experience, through the years, has endeared her to all because of her steady hand and quiet and friendly personality. She serves the Museum happily and effectively, as evidenced by the fact that her persuasive ideas are often acted upon.

A native of Pennsylvania, Gwen graduated from Grove City College. After college, and with her husband in the Air Force for four years, Gwen earned a Master's degree from Midwestern State University in Texas. Both her degrees are in history. When the Browns moved to the Cape in the 1970's, Gwen worked for Historic New England in their properties department. One of her responsibilities was to run Beauport, a National Historic Landmark property in Gloucester MA. Around 1990, Gwen added to her historical expertise as curator for the Thornton Burgess Society, famous for Thornton Burgess's children's books written in the 1920's and 1930's.



From 1994 to 1998 Gwen served as the Centerville Historical Museum Director. Later, under a new Director, she was asked to return and head the education program in the Barnstable Public Schools' third grades. After leaving the area for a time, Gwen returned and signed on at the museum as a volunteer. She has been interested in the education aspect for the museum since and heads it now with her committee.

Some of her innovations in the education area include improving, expanding and developing educational programs. One new program, "Morning at the Museum", allowed children to take part in historic games and activities. Another program, "Playing the Past," provides a way for girl scouts to earn this particular badge. Other child-oriented activities encourage school classes to visit the museum so that students can see and study for themselves actual items that were used by real people those many years ago. Unfortunately, it is becoming more difficult for student classes to visit local museums. The cost of bus transportation and conflicting schedules limits visits. Lately, the Museum focus has turned to increasing visits from the private school sector as well as the home-schooled. Presently grant money is being sought for educational programs.

Gwen appreciates the value of a local museum. "When I come to a new community I volunteer. People are receptive and open and friendly to new people. Learning about a community's background, culturally and historically, is a wonderful introduction," she states. As for Centerville's museum, Gwen feels it is impressive. "We tell the Cape Cod story. The collection is so varied and that variety can appeal to many. It fills a vital role and it is important to support the museum because it preserves our collective past."

Gwen Brown's voice may be soft-spoken but her message is loud and clear in the many roles she plays at the museum. Board members have a huge message to share for this special place with its significance to the community and to Cape Cod. It is good to know there are good hands, innovative ideas and dedicated volunteers who take part in it.

C O L L E C T I O N A C T I V I T I E S

AN HOUR OR TWO SURVEYING WOMEN'S CLOTHING

"What number is this?" asks a volunteer, referring to a gorgeous white lawn summer dress from about 1910. We are ensconced in the Elna Nelson room which is rectangular and filled to capacity with clothing and various accessories that go with the clothing. The number is found, the dress is minutely checked for condition and the information is reconfirmed. The beautiful summer dress is returned to its acid-free box and re-shelved.

The room is colorless and almost drab looking and way too small. It has an air of disorganization, yet its shelves are neatly displayed, filled with the gray boxes, whether women's wear, children's, or men's. Photos of what is inside the box help in identification. The bigger boxes contain the larger items, such as a voluminous 1870's formal heavy gown, worn in a court presentation to Queen Victoria. Smaller boxes hide hats and petticoats, waists, shawls, nightwear and capes, each with a specific number. Each, if it could talk, would have a story to tell.

The number on each collection item is the key to this systematic catalogue of what our museum has, all 17,000 items hidden away in attic spaces, cubbyholes and the temperature-controlled room we are in now. That number is the way to find an item, to match it with what is in the computer database, to find out its provenance if there is one, to check its condition and see if it is the same or should be changed, to view once more a collection of the beautiful and marvelous history of all of us.

A black velvet cape is released from its confines. It is stunning. Ooohs and aaahs escape from the volunteers as they view its excellent condition and design, a cape from the 1880's. It is delightful to rediscover a piece of clothing that is more than a hundred years old and in perfect condition. Often there are small tears or fading or stains on a piece. An 1870's woman's tennis outfit shows wear, missing buttons and sun faded cotton. Its condition is listed as fair and it is also admired, since a lady's tennis dress is an unusual find in many museum collections. It is carefully re-boxed after noting all is correct, number, notes on condition, date of make.

Dress after dress is looked at and one is fascinated about what the times were like when it was worn. Images of dances or soirees or lawn tennis, gloves and high buttoned shoes, parasols and magnificent hats, all swirl in our minds as we try to find the story it tells. The hours go quickly, boredom is not on the

menu. The volunteers know continuous monitoring is important and necessary. The work soon finishes for the day, but tomorrow another task will await doing, important work well done.



P A S T E V E N T

A DAY AT THE MUSEUM'S ANNUAL YARD SALE

It all began on August 10th at 7:30 in the morning when a group of volunteers waited to begin ferrying boxes and boxes and boxes to the back yard and to the front tables. Some individual boxes were carried to their destinations while others were transported on dollies. Slowly and steadily, the Ayling Room, which had been filled almost to capacity, emptied. Then the harder work began.

Chairs and cabinets and tables and lamps and mirrors and all sorts of larger items had to be hefted to their spots on the lawn. Cartons of books were transported to their tables. Toys and baby items and suitcases and antique pieces and jewelry had to be delivered to their places. Paintings and framed pictures were lined along the wall. Thank goodness a map identified designated areas for delivery. After that began the unpacking of all the boxes. That work alone was time consuming and difficult. Thanks to these early volunteers the work was completed when the hour to open arrived.

The sky was a perfect cerulean blue, not a cloud in view. A soft breeze kept things cool for a couple of hours before the temperature climbed to the low 80's. Several customers, some holding coffee containers, had arrived as early as the volunteers, already trying to obtain an eager view of what was going to be on display. They were asked to return at 9 when the yard sale officially opened. Most happily sauntered off and did return later.

As the day progressed, so did the yard sale. At the opening surge, while items were still being unpacked, sales were brisk and customers ready to buy. Little lulls came and went followed by other surges. Buyers paid the black aproned volunteers for what could be one lucky find or a bagful. Children seemed just as eager to find a treasure as their parents. Linens were lovingly looked at with many customers telling stories of the family table set each night with tablecloth and matching napkins.

One woman pulled a large suitcase behind her while she strolled throughout the one, three and five dollar tables. Her friend helped her fill the suitcases with perfect finds. A little girl mulled a small painted cabinet, then, with her grandmother's



help, decided she really really wanted it, but she only had one dollar. Her grandmother helped her meet the asking price. Hand in hand the two went away happily, the cabinet in a bag.

It was that kind of day. Surprising, too. Some things that were thought to go quickly, did not. Others went faster than expected. What do they say: "One person's trash is another person's treasure?" Perhaps that is the theme of yard sales.

By the end of the day, after all had been sold or discarded, another year's yard sale at the museum had come and gone. Funds had been raised for the museum's expenses.

The day was hard won, there had been so much work involved, not only on that day, but many, many days before. After a big sigh of accomplishment and hard work, now was the time to go home, put up tired feet, take a snooze and enjoy the quiet of the evening ahead. To success and to all who helped in that success, a very big thank you.



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