



Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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Number 59

Scott Perry, Chairman
Bill McGroarty, Vice Chair
Marijke Dollois, Secretary
Pat Farmer, Treasurer

The MHS Board meets the third Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m., at Pratt Hall May-Sep, and at the Public Safety Building Conference Room Oct – Apr

Montgomery History Quiz:

1. By 1963 there was a single school in Montgomery (the Village school closed in 1962) that included grades 1-8. How many students were there?

- a. 112 b. 139
- c. 151 d. 201

2. What is typically the largest expense for the MHS?

- a. Mailing/Postage
- b. Events
- c. Insurance
- d. Buildings & Grounds

Chairman's Message:

Last month we asked for anyone with information or photos of Gepetto's, a very unique restaurant and settlement (real estate development?) south of the Center to get in contact with us. Several members did and we're grateful for their help. No photo's yet but we have a lead or two that we are chasing down.

Gepetto's was built by a man named Charlie Trois, a musician who played in the band "Soul Survivors". The following is from an email Don (Chops, aka Chopper) Bordner sent us. He compiled reminiscences from Sherm Potvin, Al Oktavek, Terrel Titus, and Jim Levy with his own in 2016. The period in question was the early 1970s in Montgomery: *Scott*

"I only remember him and his band playing at Corkies.....then he decided to leave the band and remain in Montgomery....came into my real estate office and told me he wanted to buy some land and build an Italian Restaurant....but it had to be way back in the woods with "no" road frontage....and he wanted to build some sort of "village" around it, and rent or sell small stone homes or shops to the then "hippies" to sell their goodies....thought he was dreaming, and could never imagine that I was dealing with a genius !

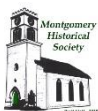
I just happened to have 49 acres listed...owned by Bunny Gregoire.....in Avery's gore that fit his needs just perfectly....he made the buy....\$15,000. was the price I believe...that was in the early Spring, but don't know the exact year....it was just when Act 250 was kicking off and his village concept, subdividing and selling small lots, etc. was under close scrutiny.

I did not hear anything more about his plans after he closed on the deal, and kind of forgot about it.....until Buddy Rouse, our local State cop, came into my office and asked "if" I have any idea of "who" may be stealing farmers "stone walls" ?

And then I paid a visit to Charlies 49 acres in the middle of the Summer of year (?)......and he and his brother were building Gepetto's...by themselves, no equipment to dig with....all by hand and genius methods to move dirt, move big rocks, etc. etc.....just amazed me as to what he was trying to do....never thought he would complete his project !

.....and realized then that the "stones" were from the "farmers missing stone walls".....seems he was paying the hippies 5 cents per stone delivered !

He did open "Gepetto's that following Winter....reservations were made by calling the Carinthia and directions we given to drive up to the Avery's Gore parking lot....Al Oktavek (sp?) would drive down with the sleigh and horse to pick you up and deliver you to the Restaurant....what a magical special place he created ...am so glad to have been able to personally experience it!"



Events

On June first we hosted the Northern Bronze Handbell Ensemble. After two years of planning Pratt Hall was filled with the sounds of historic and contemporary music played on instruments first heard in the 17th century. Each bell is precisely tuned to one note and can be rung, rubbed, hit etc to make wondrous sounds. Some cost thousands of dollars and are really heavy. It could be quite a workout. The group was playing with a high school jazz group the next day.



Bass
Bells

Not that many years ago we had a couple of programs we called "Kitchen Table Talks" with long time residents of our town. This included Billy Cabana, Bill Branthoover, and Dora Hurtibise.

We hope to revive this with "Montgomery Stories", a series of programs where people can come and talk about their life in our town. What brought them here? What are some of their most memorable experiences? What's on their minds? It will be very informal and consist largely of conversation and Q&A, oral histories of a sort. It will kick off on August 2nd with our guest, Tim Murphy. It will be at Pratt Hall at 7:00 p.m.

We're shooting for programs about once a month. Want to come tell your story? Who would you like to hear? Please let us know your ideas.

On September 9th at 6:30 p.m. we will partner with the Friends of the Library for a Vermont Humanities Council program, "Getting from Here to There: A History of Roads and Settlement in Vermont". It will be at Pratt Hall.

Thanks for Joining the MHS - Drive Continues

It's that time of year we offer a gentle reminder to join or re-join us if you haven't already. Last year's membership rebounded to 197, just 3 short of our 200 member goal. Reminder letters will be going out soon. **Please** join or rejoin us... every member matters! You can even do it on our web site. If you've already joined... Thank You!

Memorial Day Commemoration

The Society's annual program was at the St. Isidore's Cemetery and was well attended. Our speaker was Montgomery's own, Rick Ross.

Rick served a four year enlistment from 1968 to 1972 during the Viet Nam War achieving the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was an egress systems mechanic responsible for the ejection seat and canopy systems on F-105 Thunderchief fighters, nicknamed the Thud, and EB-66 electronic warfare aircraft flying Wild Weasel missions over Hanoi and Haiphong Harbor. After injuring his knee he was reassigned to the graphics career field where he put his artistic talents to good use. He served at five different locations including, Texas, New York, Illinois, Kansas and Thailand. Rick spoke about the origin of Memorial Day and the importance of remembering. Our thanks for a memorable speech.

Our thanks also to Moderator Bill McGroarty, our poem reader, Sally Newton, and our roll call reader Marijke Dollois, American Legion Post 42 (Enosburg) for supporting our annual observance, and Parma Jewett for donuts and cinnamon buns. Yum!

Scholarship Winners

This year's Joe and Irene Scott memorial scholarship was awarded to Henry Haase and our Lalia Pratt Hays / Amy Booth Meyer scholarship was awarded to Claire Ellis. Both will be attending school in the fall in Boston, Henry at BU and Claire at BC. Each received a copy of the Town history, a certificate, a short biography of their scholarships' namesake, and \$500. Neither could attend our Annual Meeting due to school orientations.

MHS scholarships are awarded to graduating Montgomery seniors going on to further education or training of any type. Applications are due May 1st every year. Applications can be downloaded from our web site. Congratulations to Henry and Claire, and their proud parents.



In Memoriam

We are sad to report the death of members Karl Fischer, Elizabeth Rawlinson, and Florence Vavoudis. All were long time members and supporters of our organization. We send our condolences to their families and friends.

MHS Annual Meeting

Our bylaws require us to have an Annual Meeting every June to provide a "State of the Society" report and elect Board members. This year's was June 21st. About 55 members and guests attended the business meeting where Chairman Scott Perry presided.



Thanks to your support the State of our Society remains very good. We are strong financially, meet our mission goals, and have fun doing it. While membership revenue remains strong overall numbers are down so far this year. The Board is working to meet a goal of 200 members. Minutes of the Annual Meeting (or any meeting) are available to any member by request.

After the business meeting 50 members and guests moved to the historic Black Lantern for drinks and dinner.



Engraved Bricks Remain Popular, Sales Continue

People continue to express interest in the engraved brick pavers and we installed 4 new ones in June. The bricks can be purchased on line at our History Store, or by calling Board member Pat Farmer, or emailing us. New orders are usually processed once a year in the Spring. We've added a map on line, and at Pratt Hall, with lists sorted by both by donor and inscription.

Farmers Market Returns for Year Three

Board member Sue Wilson organized our first ever Summer Farmers' Market, and it has been a huge success. This year it returned with live music, a few new vendors, and more. Community access cable TV visited too. The market opened on Saturday, June 15th, and will continue until September 21st. Fare includes meats, produce, baked goods, flowers, quilts, honey, maple syrup, and more. Thanks to all our vendors and all of our patrons. Stop by if you haven't already. Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Thank you Sue!

We are looking for members who can pull a shift or two staffing our booth. It's easy and greatly appreciated. Please give us a call or email. Thanks.



Society Misses Out On 2019 TD Bank Affinity Check

"Participating nonprofit organizations are required to maintain **or** grow their participation (checking units and **or** total savings balances) in order to earn a contribution one time annually on their enrollment anniversary date."

Unfortunately the MHS missed on both requirements and was down 6 checking accounts, and down in total savings balances making us ineligible for a contribution this year.

You don't have to be a member of the MHS to designate us as your Affinity beneficiary. Tell your friends! You, or they, can call Rachael Hackett at TD Bank in Enosburg at 933-2116 if you have any questions or wish to enroll. The MHS is code J6. It will cost you/them nothing and no personal information is shared with the MHS. Thank you.

Montgomery History Quiz Answers

- 1. b. 139 Students in grade 1-8 in 1963. By comparison there were 100 students in grades 1-8 in 2019
- 2. c. Our biggest annual expense is usually insurance.

This Quarter In Montgomery History

June: 1833 voters decide seven farms equals one school district. There were four school districts until about 1840.

July: 1817 First religious congregation organized, Congregationalists

August: 1973 Montgomery Historical Society organized.

2019 Farmers Market Scenes



Papa Grey Beard
Music for Baby Boomers



Prepping for CCTV
Interview



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Thanks for your support



MHS Farmers Market Before the Crowd Arrives, June 2019