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Artifacts and Fiction

Montgomery Historical Society Newsletter

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Chairman's Message

Scott Perry, Chairman
Bill McGroarty, Vice Chair
Marijke Dollois, Secretary
Sue Wilson, Treasurer

The MHS Board meets the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30, at Pratt Hall May-Sep, and at the Public Safety Building Conference Room October -April.



Michael Domina Prints of Pratt Hall make a great local gift.



Vermont History Quiz:

1. How many Justices are there on the VT Supreme Court?
2. Vermont Supreme Court nominees are selected by the Governor from a list provided by the Judicial Nominating Board. The Nominees must then be confirmed by the Senate. Once confirmed the Justices serve for:
 - a. Life
 - b. Until Impeachment / Conviction
 - c. 6 Year terms
 - d. All of the above.

During the last quarter I became curious about some of Montgomery's earliest settlers and used the internet to see what I could find out. Why did they come here? What route did they travel? What kind of people were they? Where did they settle? What did they do for work?

For example, Samuel Barnard, father of Naby Clapp, followed his daughter to Montgomery and moved the rest of his family here in part because he lost a court battle over the inheritance of his home and land in Deerfield, MA (variously referred to as "after financial difficulties"). He was a lawyer and participated in some of the earliest governmental conventions in Massachusetts. He became a key leader in organizing Montgomery's Town government and served as our first Town Clerk and later as a Franklin County judge. This research led me to a couple of turn of the century online volumes with information on early Montgomerians, "Men Of Vermont" and "Successful Vermonters", which included short biographies and some photos of other notable Montgomerians, many unknown to me.

At the same time I was re-reading the Town history and noticed a one sentence reference to Percy Shangraw, a Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court. He attended the West Hill school at Four Corners. Shouldn't we know more about him? How should we document his story when we find it? I could only find basic birth and death dates online, but a visit to the St. Albans Library's St. Albans Messenger microfiche archive provided an obituary and article on his life. The dearth of information on a VT Supreme Court Chief Justice, born and raised in town seemed a shame.

All of this begs the question, are there others? Who were Montgomery's notable citizens and what criteria should we use to put together such a collection? We've started to pull some of this information together from the early volumes, Town Reports, the Town history, et al. , and have posted it on our web site. We are open to suggestions about who should be included and why, and any information you may have would be helpful. Just email, call, or send us a note. Thanks for your support.

Scott Perry
Chairman

2010 Christmas Holiday Events

The Board decided we should make a greater effort to open Pratt Hall to the membership and public over the holidays so more people could enjoy our beautiful building and decorations. We hosted three events on consecutive days.

Dec 17th's "Members Appreciation" was well attended and drew rave reviews. Spearheaded by Sue Wilson, the Board turned out a sumptuous spread from the kitchens of Elsie, Noela, Sharon, Parma, and Marijke; and provided wines. We will probably do this again next year.

Dec 18th's "Open House" was lightly attended but greatly appreciated by those who came.

Dec 19th's "Candles and Carols" also drew a large crowd and rave reviews. This year Maestro Andrew Massey was joined by eight musicians from the Vermont Youth Orchestra which he christened the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra. Many of them played last year and were eager to return. Sue Zenith-Collins and Marijke Dollois told stories, and everyone sang divinely.

Thanks to all of you who helped make this such a fun and spirited weekend and thanks to the Board and particularly Noela McGroarty and Marijke Dollois for the wonderful decorations.

Betty Stanton Receives LLHS Award

The Montgomery Historical Society's Betty Stanton was recognized by the Vermont Historical Society and League of Local Historical Societies for significant contributions to, and the study of, local history for the Town of Montgomery at its annual meeting held October 29th at the Bennington Museum.

Betty was one of 34 persons who founded the Montgomery Historical Society in 1974 around the cause of saving our former Episcopal Church, built in 1835, which was purchased for a dollar and then repaired and restored over the next 36 years. During this period she served as a Director for 17 years, and President for 4 years.

Major initiatives under her watch included rebuilding the clock, and bell towers, and restoration of the eight, 100+ year old stained glass windows. She also coordinated the printing of the second edition of "Montgomery: History of a Town". Congratulations Betty!

Late Breaking Sad News... We just learned of the passing of Betty's daughter, Cynthia. Cynthia accompanied her mom on many sojourns back to Montgomery. Both Cynthia and Betty will be in our thoughts and prayers in the days ahead.

Montgomery Maestro, Massey, Motivates Musicians and Merry Makers. Many Moved.



Photo by Charlotte Rosshandler

Milestone Reached

This is the 25th MHS newsletter for this editor and marks the start of the seventh year of these quarterly snapshots of our Society. As always we are eager to hear your ideas and feedback. What are we doing right? What do we need to improve?

2010 Membership Wrap Up by Marijke Dollois

We finished 2010 with just over 220 memberships donating just over \$10,500. Our median donation remains \$25 and our average donation is about \$50. Over half our members live in Montgomery and even more have property and/or a Montgomery mailing address. This includes about 20 Montgomery businesses and 15 new memberships. This was the fourth year in a row we've met or exceeded our 200 membership/\$10,000 goal. Thank you all for your generosity and enthusiasm in support of our organization. You're all wonderful!

Treasurer's Report as of Dec 31, 2010

Checking	\$ 4,696.13
Scholarship	\$ 592.33
Stained Glass CD	\$ 5,767.00
Capital Improvements	\$ 5,002.97
Domina Print Account	\$ 582.64

We have no debt!!

MHS/TD Bank Affinity Program Members - 73.

Pratt Hall Clock Gets TLC

Pat Boyden of Green Mountain Clock paid us a visit since the last newsletter and lubricated the clock and adjusted the chiming trigger device. He also gave some basic instruction and advice to us on how to set and adjust the time keeping portion of the works.

Turns out he was instrumental in the 1980's reconstruction and restoration of the clock. This included chases for the train weights and a custom designed, built, and installed mechanism for regulating the evening chiming (what the editor described in the last newsletter as a "highly technical module because it includes an old hinge, spring, and electrical conduit clamp.") As it turns out, Mr. Boyden based this device on a similar mechanism that is part of the clock at UVM's Ira Allen Chapel that Mr. Boyden also maintains.

When he left, everything appeared to be in order but our clock soon started chiming 12 at incorrect hours so we'll need to work on it a bit more. It was fun learning a little history about our clock and putting a face to that story. Thanks Pat.



Teaching American History Grant Update

"Turning Points in American History" is the new name for this professional development program for 3rd-12th grade history and social studies educators. We are a supporting organization and can attend many of their programs. Their web site has more information and is at:

www.turningpointsinamericanhistory.org.

We will be hosting a program and visit in future years.



Pratt Hall Entry Work Under Way

Work has started on the tower foundation, walls and floor project. Thanks to St. Onge Construction for the expert demolition and debris removal of the front steps and landing. The steps were gone in 45 minutes which goes to show, having the right tool for the job (or a friend with the right tool) really pays.

Jan Lewandoski and his crew are now busy at work replacing the foundation where needed, adding new sills and joists, scarfing in new posts, and new trim and floor.

Estate Planning and Bequests

Including the MHS in your will or estate plan is as simple as inserting this language in your will: "I give _____ to the Montgomery Historical Society, having its principal offices at 2044 North Main Street, Montgomery, Vermont 05470, for its general purposes." Or you might name the MHS as the recipient of a percent of your estate. Likewise you could donate an item to our archives so future generations could learn from, and enjoy it.

We are working on a brochure with general guidance and hope to have it ready soon. Please contact us for more details. The MHS is a 501.c.3 non-profit organization. Thank you.

Heard at Candles and Carols

What is the ratio of an igloo's circumference to its diameter?

Eskimo Pi.

Vermont History Quiz Answer

1. Five Supreme Court Justices
2. D. "All of the above" is the most correct answer. Justices normally serve as long as they want but all are reviewed for continued service every six years by the Legislature, e.g. they will be reviewed in 2011 and 2017 etc.

The MHS Board is...

Scott Perry, Bill McGroarty, Sue Wilson, Marijke Dollois, Pat Farmer, Tim Chapin, Ken Secor, Elsie Saborowski, Jo Anne Bennett, Parma Jewett, Bill Branthoover, & John Beaty



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Hoping your 2011 is the best year ever. Thanks for supporting the MHS.