



The Historian

A Publication of the Three Village Historical Society



Inside this issue:

- Calendar of Events 2
TVHS-The First Decade 4
Sleigh's Snow Day 5
Nominations for Society Awards 6
Annual Awards 7
Candlelight House Tour Photos 7

The Three Village Historical Society

Governing Board

Peter Paul Ostapow
President

Patricia Yantz
Vice President

Kathryn Larsen
Treasurer

Karin Lynch

Corresponding Secretary

Patricia Richter
Recording Secretary

Trustees:

Maria L. Brown

Frederick Bryant

Patricia Cain

Stephen Healy

Steven Hintze

Ronald LaVita

Alfred Lewandowski

Michael O'Dwyer

Christy Radke

Donna Smith

Staff:

Karen Martin

Archivist

Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan

Director of Education

Betty Domino

Office Manager

Dianne Trautmann

Office Assistant

Volume 46 Issue 1

Winter 2009

Welcome Our New Board Members

A new slate of candidates was sworn in by exiting President, Patricia Kunder on January 19, 2009. The ceremony took place during the January Members Meeting and Lecture at the Setauket Neighborhood House, in Setauket.

Peter Paul Ostapow was sworn in to serve as president and fills the board seat left vacant by Pat Kunder, who left the board in January after a two-year term. Peter had served previously on the Board as a Trustee, and most recently as Vice President. He is a resident of Setauket. A Certified Financial Planner, Ostapow is a graduate of St. John's University of Business and is a Chartered Life Underwriter and Chartered Financial Consultant. With a commitment to community service, Peter is the Charter President of the Three Village Kiwanis Club, serves on the Board of Directors of the Three Village Chamber of Commerce, and is a Past President of the Island Estates Community Association. Peter and his wife Irene are residents of Setauket, and have four daughters, and two grandchildren.

Vice President, Patricia Yantz has served on the Board of Trustees for four years and has chaired the Society's Annual Spirits Tour, worked on the Candlelight House Tour, Educational Awards, and the Annual Awards Dinner. An art teacher at Sachem High School, Patty has been teaching for 32 years and holds B.S., M.S. and MSW degrees. Involved in community service, she is a member of St. James Church, the Old Field Club, the Long Island Museum and Gallery North. Patty and her husband John have four children and reside in Setauket.

Karin Lynch is our new Corresponding Secretary. Previously Karin served as the



New Board members sworn in on January 19th: (standing from left to right: Steven G. Hintze, Ronald LaVita, Patricia Yantz, Peter Paul Ostapow, Karin Lynch, Stephen Healy and Frederick Bryant. Seated: Patricia Cain, Maria L. Brown and Donna Smith.) Photo courtesy of Bev Tyler.

Recording Secretary, a position she has held for the past three years. Karin, a resident of Setauket, is an Accounts Receivable Supervisor at SCO Family of Services

Patricia Richter has served on the Board as a trustee for one year before stepping into the position of Recording Secretary. Patty is a teacher at a school in Smithtown. She resides in Setauket.

Kathryn Larsen continues on in the position of Treasurer. Kathy is the Director of Accounting Services at SUNY Stony Brook. Kathy and her family reside in Setauket.

Newly elected to the Board of Trustees are Ronald LaVita, Patricia Cain, Maria L. "Midge" Brown, Steven Hintze and Stephen Healy. All are residents of the Three Villages.

Re-elected to the Board is Frederick Bryant and Michael O'Dwyer, both have served on the Board of Trustees for several years. They will be joining current Trustees Albert Lewandowski, Christy Radke and Donna Smith

Building and Grounds

Stay connected.

Receive event reminders and updates on volunteering opportunities.

Send us your email address!
info@tvhs.org

The Building Committee had another year filled with excitement. Recently, we arranged to have three trees taken down behind the building, two of the trees had died from the flooding and a third locust tree was full of vines and would have struck the building if it fell. Speaking of flooding, we had over 10 inches of water in the back section of the basement from the late fall rains - and a couple of inches in the section under the main building area. We are now on the third sump pump in the basement after the second one failed! We had removed or lifted items off the floor previously so there was no damage to supplies - just a lot of work to pump out the water! The Building Committee also coordinated the holiday decorating of the building for the third year. We hope folks enjoyed the decorations both inside and outside of the building!

We also want to thank the two Eagle Scouts candidates again who chose the

Society for their projects. John Kruse completed his work on the section of fence under the pine trees and placed two benches at the end of the driveway to be used by our committees. On a hot summer day, it is very cool under the trees in the shade! When the weather gets warmer, stop by and enjoy the peace and quiet of our field. Brendan Yantz is working on a shed at the end of the driveway. The shed will be used to store many of the materials used by our committees. The shed looks great!

We would like to acknowledge and thank Sean Fleck, our landscaper, who is doing a great job maintaining our property. As part of our community service, the Society contracted with Sean to also maintain the Brookhaven corner property that is just beyond our fence.

Anyone interested in helping with the Building Committee please contact the Office.

Good & Welfare

Sympathy is extended to Florence Dunn on the passing of her husband George. George and Florence were volunteers for the Society for many years.

Best wishes to Harry Lynch who is recovering from recent health concerns. Our thoughts are with him and his family, and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Best wishes to Dick Russell and Mike Russell, both recovering from surgery.

Good luck wishes go out to Bee and Sue Jayne with their recent move to New Hampshire. Both active in the Society, especially on the Rhodes Committee, the mother and daughter team worked on many TVHS events and special projects. Bee was a driving force behind the TVHS publications: *Images of America: Stony Brook*, and *Images of America: The Setaukets, Old Field and Poquott*. Sue was principal photographer for our most recent publication: *The Three Villages, Then and Now*.

The Historian

Is published quarterly by the Three Village Historical Society.

Suggestions for articles are welcome. Please send all articles, photos, feedback and ideas to:

newsletter@tvhs.org

In the subject line please include:
The Historian.

The deadline for our next issue is March 20th.

Acting Editor: Pat Kunder
Layout: Dianne Trautmann

©2009, Three Village Historical Society

TVHS Calendar of Events

Wednesday, March 18, 2009 : 32nd Annual Awards Dinner: Stony Brook Yacht Club. Special entertainment for the evening will be provided by comedian and author Peter Bales. Price per person: \$50.00 **Please turn to page 7 for more information.** Reservations can be made by calling the office: 631-751-3730 or mailing in the order form found on page 7.

Monday, April 20, 2009, 7:00pm: Monthly Lecture Series and Annual Pot Luck Supper. Lecture : "Connecting to Collections" by Karen Martin, TVHS Archivist . Bring an entrée to share, beverages and dessert provided. Meeting takes place at the Setauket Neighborhood House, 95 Main St., Setauket. 7:00: reception, 7:30 Member's Meeting, 7:45-9:00 Speaker.



"If we each asked a friend, neighbor, relative or co-worker to join TVHS we could double our membership".

Peter Paul Ostapow,
President of the Three
Village Historical Society.
*Photo courtesy of Susan
Byrnes*

If you are interested in volunteering for any of our Winter Events help is needed for the , Monthly Lecture Series and Annual Dinner. Contact Donna Higgins at 751-5177

President's Message

Greetings to all, and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and -- dare I say -- prosperous New Year. I am greatly honored to have been elected your President. I feel a great sense of excitement as I look at the countless opportunities we have to take our Society to the next level.

We have some initial goals to achieve. The first and foremost is to define who we are, and why we are. Lynn Jones of Landmarks Association in Saint Louis asked, "Why Preserve?" Her answer was simple yet provocative, and applies very much to the Three Villages.

"The area is extraordinary, with a rich heritage. We live with history every day. The story of our town is written all around us; in the streets, buildings, and landscape that we take for granted." Jones added that the object of historic preservation is to "maintain the legacy of our past for future generations."

The Department of Historic Resources in Virginia states it another way: "Wonderful things happen when communities take stock of their historic resources and put them to work for public benefit."

We can use our rich history to build civic pride, revitalize downtowns, spur economic development, generate tourism and educate residents and children about their local heritage. It is especially important to use these opportunities during this time of economic turmoil. Our forefathers banded together during times such as these to build better tomorrows and if we are to learn anything from the past we, too, will work together to build a brighter and stronger future for generations to come.

Our other goals are to increase community awareness and participation, and increase membership and revenue. Your newly-appointed Board of Directors has volunteered to devote time, effort, talent and resources to help make 2009 one of the most fun-filled, productive and worthwhile years ever. Our talented and dedicated staff -- Elizabeth Kaplan, Karen Martin, Betty Domino, and Dianne Trautmann, -- will be there to help us every step of the way. With your support and the support of hundreds of volunteers we can make history come alive in '09.

Thank you again for this opportunity to serve one of the premier historical societies in the country.

Cordially,
Peter Paul Ostapow
President

Help Design An Exhibit at Our Headquarters!

If you've got a flair for designing decorative displays, are a hands-on person, and would enjoy giving an hour or two at headquarters, please let us know. We've posted interesting and informative text boards in the entry room about *George Washington's Setauket Spies*, and now they're ready for us to add some pizzazz. We offer an outlet for your creativity and a chance for your work to be seen and appreciated. Please phone our office at 751-3730 between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm (or leave a message after hours) for details.

Your Ad could be here!

TVHS will be offering advertising opportunities in future newsletters. If you are interested in sponsorships, please contact our office to request more information about sponsorship packages.

The Three Village Historical Society 1964 to 1973 - The First Decade

By William B. Minuse and Beverly Tyler

The Three Village Historical Society was founded by a group of men and women who believed that the history of the Setauket/Stony Brook area needed to be brought to the attention of every resident and visitor. The Three Village area was, they understood, not only the original settlement in the Town of Brookhaven, but the home of many ordinary people who did extraordinary things. These ordinary people were hard working settlers, patriots and Revolutionary War spies, farmers and sea captains, shipbuilders and leaders of industry, poets and painters, native Americans and immigrants.

The first organizational meeting was held at the Suffolk Museum (later the Exchange of the Three Village Garden Club) on Friday, October 30, 1964. Present at the formation meeting were Edward R. Rhodes, Bill Cabrey, Bill Minuse, Russ Atkinson, Andy White and Bill Simpson. Reg Rhodes was elected the Society's first President. By the fourth meeting they elected Bill Ploch, Vice President, Andy White, Treasurer and Frank Davis, Secretary. The Trustees and members continued to meet at the Suffolk Museum until 1976.

The drafted purposes of the society were to discover and collect material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the Three Villages, to provide for the preservation and accessibility of such material, to preserve historic buildings and monuments, to disseminate historical information, to arouse interest in the past and to acquire all kinds of articles of historical interest.

The Regents of the University of the State of New York granted the Society a Provisional Charter on December 16, 1966 and an Absolute Charter on September 27, 1968.



"A HISTORICAL HOME IS MARKED: Capt. Edward R. Rhodes places the first distinctive marker on a sea captains' home in Stony Brook. Another has been placed in East Setauket and more will be placed as research is completed." (Three Village Herald May 6, 1966)

The Charter Members listed on the Provisional Charter were Russell A. Atkinson, Frank G. Davis, Ward Melville, William B. Minuse, William F. Ploch, Edward R. Rhodes, Percy W. Smith, William T. Simpson, Kate Strong and Andrew M. White.

To bring local history to life for members and local residents the society founders took three significant steps. They joined the American Association for State and Local History, the national organization that provides professional expertise and training. They also began to collect oral history and other historical materials about the local area and its people. Bill Ploch was appointed the Custodian of documents and artifacts. In addition the society took on a major house marking project that has continued to this day.

Captain Edward R. Rhodes, President 1964-1970, was a retired merchant ship captain, a talented painter of marine subjects, and his primary interest was the nautical history of the Three Villages. He did an enormous amount of research in that fertile field. This was documented in the Three Village Historian, started by Capt. Rhodes and first issued in June 1965. He initiated, also in 1965, a program to mark the many homes of ship captains and shipbuilders in the Three Village area. First, society members

researched the history of each home to be marked. Capt. Sidney Medd cut out and painted the house signs, Mrs. Marjorie Mouquin and others lettered them and Capt. Rhodes decorated them with the Society's logo the hermaphrodite brig, *Daisy*, built at East Setauket by Nehemiah Hand in 1871.

"The Three Village Historical Society held its first public meeting last Friday night at the Suffolk Museum, Stony Brook. About sixty residents were present." (Three Village Herald, February 26, 1965)

In 1967, the society was instrumental in organizing the Association of Suffolk County Historical Societies which grew out of a meeting hosted by Ward Melville at the Three Village Inn on October 2nd. The association still holds quarterly tours and meetings at historic sites throughout Suffolk County and occasionally in Nassau County. All members of historical societies are still invited to attend. In 1968 the Society, through the efforts of Capt. Rhodes and Bill Ploch, received a gift of \$25,000 from Mrs. Helen G. Fisher to create a building fund.

The second President was Dr. Percy L. Bailey, Jr. (1971-1972), a retired college professor. Under his leadership *Setauket, the First Three Hundred Years*, produced in 1955 by the Setauket-Brookhaven Tercentenary Committee and long out of print, was reprinted in November 1971. This is still a very valuable source of historic information. Dr. Bailey also took over as editor of the Three Village Historian from Capt. Rhodes, editor since the first issue in June 1965. The first of many bus trips to historic places was held on June 5, 1971, when the Society visited the Richmondtown Restoration on Staten Island. (To be continued in our next issue of the Historian)



Rhodes Trip: Sleight Snow Day

By Karen Martin
TVHS Archivist



Bertha Mae Sleight (born on October 7th, 1877.) was an avid writer. In several manuscripts found in the collections of the Three Village

Historical Society she recounts her childhood growing up in Stony Brook. She spent many happy hours at her grandparent's home, *Yesteryears*, in Stony Brook with her sister Mabel. Her grandparents, David T. and Delia Bayles owned a large piece of property backing onto the Stony Brook Mill Pond. Alongside the home stood grandfather's lumber business. Today the house stands alone, the lumber yards long gone. The character of the house has also changed with the removal in the 1940's of the home's Victorian architectural details. Take a moment to reflect with her on memories of the Blizzard of March 12, 1888 in old Stony Brook in her own words

"I must also speak of the fun we had in the Blizzard of 1888. Snow fell heavily that Monday morning and our elders were debating as to whether we would be able to go to school. A knock at the

side door, and there stood a tiny form. Edna Smith had somehow managed to make her way from her house across the creek. As the snow had blown away from around the house, Mrs. Smith had no idea of the fierceness of the storm when she let Edna start. Grandmother, who was always drying out children who had fallen into the Pond when skating or fishing, soon had Edna in dry clothing and eating a good breakfast.

Mabel, Edna and I then clamored "can't we go to school?" for Charlie



Miss Hallock

Brush, who lived next door, had appeared to say that our teacher, Miss Hallock, had gone. As the old school house was less than a block away, we were bundled into our clothes and off we went. Three boys, and we three girls, were the only ones present, and at ten o'clock the trustee of the school sent one of his men to say we must all leave at once. With the man helping Miss Hallock, the boys and we three girls, we struggled back to Grandmother's house where we were held prisoners for several days. Such fun for Mabel and me, with Edna as our guest; for we knew

nothing of the anxiety of Edna's mother since no word of Edna's safety could reach her. We joked and laughed, played with our dolls,



The old Stony Brook Schoolhouse

made candy, watched Charlie Brush build a snow house outside the dining room window-one so big he could turn around inside it. From the front windows we watched the horse-drawn snow ploughs endeavoring to clear the sidewalks, as the snow packed down in the roads for the sleighs. Finally came the day when Father started home with Edna, who says she can remember looking over the edges of the snow piled up on either side of the path as she rode on Father's shoulder. In certain places, this snow lasted until blossom time."

Photos for this story, as well as Bertha's writings on growing up in Stony Brook are from the Rhodes Collection, supported in part by member donations.

7th Graders at RC Murphy JHS Enjoy Our Traveling Spy Museum

By Elizabeth Kahn Kaplan
TVHS Director of Education

The American Revolution came alive to 7th graders at Murphy JHS for two weeks in February, when teachers Tim Ehlers, Carol Donovan, and John Black brought our Traveling Spy Museum into their classrooms. A boxful of costumes, a model whaleboat, spy glass, 2'x 3' laminated maps and other artifacts, assembled with a facsimile of George Washington's 1779 letter to Benjamin Tallmadge about the operation of the Setauket spy ring,

made local history "up close and personal": for the students.

The letter was purchased at auction in 2006 with funds from Marsha and Henry Laufer, the Three Village Historical Society, New York State, and Stony Brook University, and is now housed in the main library at SBU. The Traveling Spy Museum and accompanying Teachers Guide were developed so that students would appreciate the significance to this community of Washington's letter and the Setauket Spy Ring.

Teachers who wish to reserve the Traveling Spy Museum for their classes may download a reservation form from our Web site: www.threevillagehistoricalsociety.org/TravelingSpyMuseum or telephone us at 751-3730.

If you haven't renewed your membership please do so as soon as possible. We look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming events. Thank you for your continued support!

Nominations Accepted for Society Awards

Each year the Society's Award Committee reviews nominations sent in by Society members and presents to the Board a selection of potential candidates for Award Recipients from local businesses, local residents, homeowners, Society members and youth who have made significant contributions in helping with *Preserving our Natural Heritage* within the Three Village area.

The Awards that are presented each year are:

The Robert Cushman Murphy Memorial Award- In recognition of significant contributions to the preservation and conservation of our natural environment and to the fostering of a personal identification with the natural heritage of the Three Villages.

Ward Melville Community Award – In appreciation of valuable contributions to the advancement of the quality of life in the Three Villages and the fostering of pride in the rich historical heritage of our homes and lands.

Kate Wheeler Strong Memorial Award – In recognition of significant contributions toward the fostering of interest in local history and a fuller appreciation of the rich historical and cultural heritage of this community.

Maggie Gillie Memorial Award – For contributions by a member of the Society in recognition of overall dedicated service, and for significant contributions to furthering the goals of the Society.

Gayle Becher Memorial Award – In recognition of volunteer efforts during the past year to help the Society by performing those necessary tasks that facilitate its efficient operation. The Gayle Becher Memorial Award honors volunteers whose work consists of loyal support repeated on a regular basis.

Three Village Historical Society Young Historian Award – For outstanding contribution to the Society by a young person.

Three Community Award Certificates are also given out for:

Enhancing or restoring a building to be used as a commercial structure in a way that contributed to the historic beauty of the area.

For a house restoration or renovation and on-going maintenance and preservation in keeping with the original architectural design.

For ornamental planting or landscaping that enhances the beauty of the Three Village area.

Nominations will be taken by mail or by email: info@tvhs.org up to March 2, 2009

Please send the form in with the names of the nominees and why you think they should be considered for the Award or Certificate to:

Nomination Committee
Three Village Historical Society
PO Box 76
East Setauket, NY 11733

No telephone nominations will be accepted. You may nominate in more than one category. Awards will be presented at the Annual Awards Dinner. *The names of the Award Recipients will be announced prior to the Dinner on March 18th.*

32nd Annual Society Awards Nomination Form

This form may be copied if you have more than one nomination.

Category _____

Nominee: _____
Name address (Day Phone)

Nominator: _____
Name address (Day Phone)

Please describe briefly why you think this nominee should receive a 2009 Society Award or Community Award Certificate in this category. You may attach a resume or biography.

Candlelight House Tour 2008



The 30th Annual Candlelight House Tour enjoyed beautiful weather for both days, making the walking tour of houses around the Setauket Village Green area a treat. From left to right: The Porter House, inside the Carollo House, the Carlson House and the Tasman House. Thanks to Co-Chairs Christine Petrone and Pat Vitale and the army of volunteers, decorators, home owners and our generous sponsors for making the event a success. For more pictures visit: <http://www.tvhs.org/photogallery.htm>
 Photos courtesy of Bev Tyler

32nd Annual Awards Dinner—March 18, 2009

The Three Village Historical Society Invites You to Attend its 32nd Annual Awards Dinner at the Stony Brook Yacht Club, Dock Road, in Stony Brook N. Y. Wednesday, March 18th, 2009: 6 -7 o'clock - Hors d'Oeuvres, 7 o'clock - Dinner

Entertainment for the evening will be provided by comedian and author Peter Bales. Dr. Bales, (Ph.D. in history from SUNY Stony Brook, 1992) has appeared as a stand-up comedian at countless comedy clubs, corporate functions and colleges across the country and has appeared on a variety of television networks, including FOX, Comedy Central, MTV

and VH-1. Peter's recently published book "How Come They Always Had Battles in National Parks?" is a humorous yet entirely factual account of American history up through the Civil War.

The evening will begin with Butler Style Hors d'Oeuvres and a cash bar from 6-7 p.m. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. beginning with a mixed green salad, followed by a choice of one of the following entrées: broiled filet of Salmon with Dijonnaise sauce or sautéed breast of chicken with fresh spinach and melted Fontina cheese or sliced marinated London Broil with herb

infused olive oil. All entrees will be served with the Chef's Choice of Potato & Vegetable. Dessert and Coffee & Tea will finish the evening.

This year the Society is offering a Scroll of Honor in recognition of our 32nd Awards Anniversary and to help continue the Society's mission to further educate the public about our rich cultural heritage. The Scroll of Honor donation levels are: Gold Level: \$100.00, Silver Level: \$50.00, and Bronze Level: \$30.00. Contributor's names will be listed in the Scroll of Honor in the evening's program.

Please detach and return this form and payment before March 10th

Name(s): _____ Phone # _____

Address: _____

Others at table: _____

Number of Reservations: _____

(at \$50.00 per person)

Scroll of Honor Contributions

Total Amount Dinner: \$ _____

- Gold Level \$100.00
- Silver Level \$50.00
- Bronze Level: \$30.00

Total Amount Scroll of Honor \$ _____

Total Payment Enclosed: \$ _____

Name to appear on the Scroll of Honor : _____

VISA/Master Card Number: _____ Expiration: _____

Mail to: **Annual Dinner Committee**, Three Village Historical Society, P. O. Box 76, E. Setauket, NY 11733

Three Village Historical Society
PO Box 76
East Setauket, NY 11733-0076

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage Paid
E. Setauket, NY
Permit No. 88

Return Service Requested



All members are entitled to Basic Benefits:



10% Discount on all Gift Shop Purchases
Subscription to The Historian newsletter
Nine Monthly Member Meetings
Discount and Advance purchase on all
of the Society's programs

Suggested Membership Levels:

- Individual: \$30.00
- Dual/Family: \$50.00
- Patron: \$100.00
- Benefactor: \$250.00
- Major Contributor: \$500.00
- Founder: \$1000.00

**Rates Reflect Annual Dues,
Renewable January of Each Year**

For a complete list of benefits for each level of
membership please visit our website:

<http://www.tvhs.org>

The Three Village Historical Society Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Payment:

Check payable to: **Three Village Historical Society**

or

Credit Card: MasterCard or Visa:

Name on Card: _____ Exp. _____

Account Number: _____

Mail application to:
The Three Village Historical Society
93 North Country Rd.
Setauket, NY 11733