

## The Great New England Hurricane of 1938 L. Allyn



*The Methodist Church in Mystic was completely flattened by the 1938 Hurricane.*

On September 21, 1938, a category 3 hurricane unexpectedly roared up the Atlantic seaboard and fell upon an unprepared Long Island and New England. Six hundred lives were lost. Property destruction was over \$300 million in 1938 dollars. Changes to the landscape are still visible today. The Mystic River Historical Society invites you to their monthly meeting in the Fellowship Hall of the Mystic Congregational Church on **Wednesday, September 24 at 7:30 p.m.** when Louis Allyn will present an illustrated lecture on the topic *“What would it be like if the ’38 Hurricane happened today instead of 70 years ago?”*

Starting in grammar school when his grandfather gave him a Photo Record “Hurricane and Flood – New England’s Greatest Disaster”, Allyn, a native of Mystic, has spent a lifetime gathering an extensive collection of pictures, books, newspapers, magazines, movies, post cards and stories of the Great New England Hurricane. “All along the shore you can find reminders of the hurricane.” Be sure to attend and see photographs taken before and after the hurricane and then taken at the same locations today. There will be scenes of destruction from fire, river flooding, sustained winds of up to 121 miles per hour, storm surge and battering waves.

**MRHS Foliage Trip to the Poconos & Amish Country!**  
**October 21, 22, and 23!**  
*See page 3 for details.*

*from the*  
**PRESIDENT'S DESK**

Lou Allyn

*Part One of a Two-Part Series*

I'm writing this on a perfect August summer day – clear bright blue skies and a cool breeze from the north. The hint of autumn reminds me that it is nearly time to start another annual cycle of Mystic River Historical Society activities. Summer was productive with The Portersville Academy Family Activity Centers open each week, while the Downes Building was busy with volunteers and staff working on our collections and helping visitors seeking information about Mystic. September begins the monthly meetings with the Board of Trustees on the 15th and the members meeting on the 24th – topic THE GREAT NEW ENGLAND HURRICANE OF 1938. We are also planning meetings of the Curatorial and Finance Committees.

I thought that this would be a good time to review the results of the Membership Survey which was distributed last spring. There were 27 responses which is not large enough for statistical analysis, but there are some interesting observations to be drawn from the generally consistent replies. Overall the response was very positive regarding MRHS's programs, communications, financing and our operations in general. Ratings of 4 and 5 (5 being the best) were predominant for Antique Appraisal Days, Bus Tours, House Tours, Monthly Program Meetings and research in our collections. Importance to people was not quite as high on activities that they had not participated in, i.e. Family Activity Centers, Grade School Classroom Days and Walking Tours. Communications also rated many 5's and 4's for The Portersville Press newsletter, Constant Contact email, newspaper announcements, our website, and announcements at members meetings. We will continue to do all of these.

With regard to financing, there was strong support for raising money through annual dues, house tours and grants. It was deemed unlikely that any money would be available from local government. One interesting item was the number of people who supported an annual fund drive in addition to the dues. This is an idea for the Board to consider, perhaps with request targeted toward specific needs.

*See you on the 24th.*



Portersville Academy was front page news in our local Mystic River Press "Currents" magazine insert of Thursday, August 21, 2008. Elizabeth Yerkes, writer and photographer. The "Back to School in Mystic" article highlighted the Academy history and activity centers.

The Newsletter of the Mystic River Historical Society is published monthly, September through May, with a combined issue for November and December, by the Mystic River Historical Society • Box 245 Mystic, CT 06355  
Back issues of the newsletter are available for online viewing at [www.mystichistory.org](http://www.mystichistory.org)



# Foliage Trip: The Poconos & Amish Country October 21 - 23

- J. Everett



*The Gardens at Nemours Mansion - the former estate of Alfred I DuPont.*



*Gifford Pinchot's Grey Towers House (upper left) and the Daniel Boone Homestead (lower right.)*



Off we go to the Poconos and Amish Country and other exciting diversions but we need your very prompt response if you would like to go!

Tuesday, October 21, we leave Mystic at 8:15am for an elegant lunch and time to explore the little shops of Milford, Pennsylvania. We will visit Grey Towers house and gardens, the home of Gifford Pinchot, founder of the U.S. Forest Service, and set off for Forty Fort and Wilkes-Barre. There we will drive by the 1790 home of Nathan Denison and the site of the Wyoming Massacre before we continue to Hazleton and our mountain top hotel. Dinner will follow next door at your leisure.

Wednesday, October 22, we leave Hazleton for Hawk Mountain. This is the time of the raptor migration so bring your binoculars! There will be time to explore the visitors center or walk the trails and look for birds while enjoying the foliage. We will continue on to lunch and the Daniel Boone Homestead and Farm near Reading. We complete the afternoon and evening with a guided tour of the Plain and Fancy Amish Farm, a visit to the farm house, and finally an abundant Amish Farm Feast. Our hotel for the night is right next door.

Thursday, October 23. We will enjoy a full breakfast at the hotel before we set off for the Nemours Mansion near Wilmington, the former 300 acre estate of Alfred I Dupont, fully restored and reopened to the public this past spring, surrounded with woods and elegant French gardens. After lunch we will head north back to Mystic arriving in early evening.

We need your response as soon as possible, certainly by **September 15th**. Cost per person sharing will be \$535.00 which includes all transportation, driver expenses, lodging, breakfasts, lunches, one dinner, all admissions, snacks, and cancellation insurance. Single supplement is \$150.00. Send your check in full to MRHS, P O Box 245, Mystic CT 06355. If you have questions or would like to put your name on the list call Joyce Everett at 536-6339.

## MRHS Key West Trip Cancelled

- J. Everett

The Sad News - The trip to Key West did not have enough participants to go. We hope to do it another time for all the enthusiastic people who did want to make the trip.

## Happy Birthday, Twice Over!

A splendid idea! Instead of birthday presents, gifts to the Mystic River Historical Society were made in honor of Paul Ingle on the occasion of his 80th birthday party. Thank you to the following for their thoughtfulness:

Nancy E. Anderson • Alex Anderson • James N. Bagnall • Penny Boman Mowbray • Mary Lou Carlson Joyce & Bill Everett • William Jr. Fish • Elizabeth Foster Gale E. Franklin • Hope F. Leuba • Jervis Kester • Edgar King • E. Priscilla Nystrom • Bjorn M. Olson • Anthony & Joyce Pippo • Julia H. Porter • Dutcha Slicker-Hersant



# May 2008 Meeting Minutes



- C. Marco

*The Board of Trustees of the Mystic River Historical Society met at the Mystic Chamber of Commerce on Monday, May 19, 2008 at 7:30pm. Board members present were Lou Allyn, David Evans, Tim Evers, Dorrie Hanna, Helen Keith, Jim Kimenker, Cathy Marco, Betty O'Donnell, John Porter, and Kit Werner. Jane Preston attended as a guest.*

**President (Lou Allyn):** Minutes of the April meeting were accepted. Lou planned to attend the 30th anniversary of the Mystic Depot renovation with the rededication Ceremony on Saturday, May 31 at 10:30 along with Dorrie, Helen and Tim.

A review of dates for the 2008-2009 board & member meetings and for website updates & Portersville Press was discussed. Paul will make appropriate reservations with the Congregational Church for our member meetings.

Our Board member, Tim Evers, is currently serving as President of the Mystic Community Bikes project. He is looking for bikes and contributions. If anyone would like to donate, please contact Tim.

**Treasurers Report (Bill Everett):** No significant changes to report in financial report.

**Corresponding Secretary (Kit Werner):** Another very busy month with 64 thank you letters: one to our May program speaker, 10 to those who helped with the cleanup on April 26th, and 53 for donations related to membership renewals and to newsletter patrons.

## STANDING COMMITTEES

**Building & Grounds (John Porter):** The Grounds Cleanup was held on Saturday, April 26th, from 9:00 until noon. Ample volunteers showed up and we were done by 10:10. John reported that there was even enough time to eat all of the doughnut holes.

Interior paint is peeling in Portersville Academy - possibly due to chalking of the plaster surface. John removed most of the loose paint and resealed the major areas of peeling. Some peeling is evident throughout the building.

During the Grounds Cleanup it was noticed that parked cars have damaged the NW corner of Portersville Academy. John repainted the damaged areas, and we've asked for cooperation from our neighbors. The property line is just 6" from the building, contributing to the problem.

**Curatorial (Dorrie Hanna, Collection Manager):** Dorrie is prepared a display for the Mystic Depot celebration on May 31. New acquisitions include files from Bill Hermann regarding the Mystic Community Center, including meeting minutes and material on the fund raising campaign to build the new Center at Williams Beach. The Curatorial Committee was likely to meet in June.

There is a Past Perfect software update. Louise is participating in an evaluation of a new user support program.

**Education (Tim Evers):** Forty six third graders from Charles Barnum School came to Portersville Academy on May 20th. Tim played the role of Schoolmaster Mr. Avery.

The Family Activity Centers will be open to local or visiting families on Tuesday mornings and Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoon from June 22nd through September 7th. Karen Havrilla is running our Family Activity Center's summer schedule. On Sunday, June 22nd (from 1-4) we had a Strawberry Festival. This is an excellent program for children between 3 and 12 years of age. Brochures were available. It was discussed that the newspapers should include this weekly on their calendars during the summer and it may be a great feature article.\*

Many thanks to Terry Courchaine who, again this year, vacuumed and scrubbed PVA prior to the first of our School Field Trips. It is a joy to have it dust and mold free.

**Outreach/Pedicab (Tim Evers/Helen Keith):** Tim reported that we received \$500 from the sale of the pedicab.

Jane Preston and Helen Keith presented our Remember When 1950s program to the residents at Mystic River Homes on Thursday May 15th. This was the third and last installment of our Remember When series and was very well received. The program booklets, music, books, etc. are on file in the Downes Bldg. They are available for any member to share with other retirement facilities; local schools or Senior Centers. Anyone who does do this in the future should also bring membership brochures along with them to pass out (a good way to market ourselves and attract new members).

**Finance (Helen Keith):** The Finance Committee met on May 13th. Bill Everett has applied for a Chelsea Groton Bank Credit Card for the Society. It was decided that Joyce Everett and Dorothy A. Hanna would be named as purchasers for the Society. At the April Meeting Lou Allyn, Helen Keith and Bill Everett were authorized to make the selection of purchasers. In the interest of clarity and continuity, the finance committee recommended a change to the wording of the approved resolution. Therefore, Helen made a motion, which was seconded, to revise the wording of last month's resolution to state that the President, Finance Chairperson and Treasurer would decide which individuals would be permitted to use the credit card and authorize Bill Everett to contact Chelsea Bank with this information. The motion was unanimously carried.

\*See sample on page 2 from the Mystic River Press.

The Finance Committee reviewed and approved changes in the terms of our insurance policy. It was also agreed that monies would be moved immediately from our short-term investment account to other Vanguard mutual funds in our Basket of Funds which will produce more growth and income. Some funds will still be left in our Money Market and short-term accounts to provide cash when and as needed.

The House and Garden Tour Committee will need seed money from both organizations and that Committee has asked to appoint an independent Treasurer and open a separate account to receive all income and pay all bills.

The Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut will be asked for information about the local non-profit organization investment services they offer.

The Finance and Curatorial committees agreed that when Emily Perkins is not in the office, we employ Helen Keith to be the office manager.

**Hospitality (Cindy Allyn):** Cathy Marco (compliments of her husband, Frank) provided wine for the annual meeting/pot luck supper. Cindy and Lou prepared the meeting room during the afternoon.

**Information/Technology (Stephanie Thorp):** Nothing new except that Dorrie had an incident report to submit.

**Marketing (Sally Halsey):** Press releases have been submitted as well as updates to the electronic calendars. We have received coverage for our upcoming annual meeting.

**Membership (Cynthia Allyn):** New members are Randall Brooks and Dana & Richard Semeraro. Welcome!

**Nominating (Tim Evers):** The following nominees for Trustee were submitted to the membership for vote at the annual meeting: Kit Werner, Bettye Noyes, Stephanie Thorp, and Jane Preston.

**Program (Paul Ingle):** Judith DuPont was the speaker at our Annual Meeting in May (where she also sold her book). Paul has already lined up speakers for next fall. In September, the topic will be the Hurricane of '38 (it is the

70th anniversary and of special interest to Lou Allyn!).

**Special Events (Joyce Everett):** Nothing new, except...Trip to Salem and Gloucester on June 11 and 12.

**Walking Tour (David Evans):** Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, Jennifer Pryor! David showed off the finished product "a Mystic Riverside Walking Adventure...a self-guided history of Gravel Street, Mystic, Connecticut." What a wonderful product and David spoke praises for the work Jennifer did to make this look so good...and the help from the Mystic Chamber of Commerce. The Board also thanked David for this successful undertaking.

The plan is to distribute these guides to the Mystic Depot, key businesses in town, the Downes building, the Mystic & Noank Library, and to members at the Annual Meeting. We also hope to get some press on this from the local newspapers and from Carol Kimball. The Guide will be emailed to all members on Constant Contact and posted on our website.

David wants to find a college student (i.e. Connecticut College) who might receive credit for helping us extend this project to include more information about the residents of these homes on Gravel Street.

**House Tours (Sally Halsey)** - Although Sally could not attend the board meeting, she submitted her report. "The House and Garden Committee did not meet on May 14th due to committee member conflicts. We have identified a number of houses and gardens, and are in the process of contacting the owners. The tour is tentatively called "A River Walk" and is focused on houses along the river north of downtown."

The next House Tour meeting was June 11 and everyone who is interested in helping is encouraged to contact Sally Halsey. We will identify committees and try to fill them with members of the MRHS and Garden Club.

**New Business:** Helen Keith is reviewing a new book "The History of Mystic, Connecticut" by Leigh Fought, published December 2007 for possible MRHS purchase.

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- C. Marco

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Mr. & Mrs. Bailey Pryor

# June 2008 Meeting Minutes



- C. Marco

The Board of Trustees of the Mystic River Historical Society met at the Mystic Chamber of Commerce on Monday, June 18, 2008. Board members present were Lou Allyn, David Evans, Tim Evers, Joyce Everett, Bill Everett, Sally Halsey, Dorrie Hanna, Jim Kimenker, Cathy Marco, Betty O'Donnell, and John Porter.

**President (Lou Allyn):** Minutes of the May meeting were accepted. Lou passed around a sample of the "Connecticut Genealogy News" (P.O. Box 435, Glastonbury, CT) if anyone wanted to subscribe to it. A grant of \$150 was given by the Mystic Women's Club. We will be using this to cover our Walking Tour brochure expenses. A thank you note from retired Vice President Helen Keith was read.

Lou asked for a report from Tim Evers of the Nominating Committees selection for new officers. The following nominees for officers were presented, seconded and passed unanimously by the Board for 2008-2009:

<b>President:</b>	<b>Lou Allyn</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>John Porter</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Bill Everett</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Cathy Marco</b>
<b>Corresponding Secretary:</b>	<b>Kit Werner</b>

Lou Allyn appointed the following board members to head the various committees, which was presented, seconded and passed unanimously by the Board:

<b>Building &amp; Grounds:</b>	<b>John Porter</b>
<b>Curatorial:</b>	<b>Bettye Noyes</b>
<b>Education:</b>	<b>vacant at present</b>
<b>Finance:</b>	<b>David Evans</b>
<b>Information Technology:</b>	<b>Stephanie Thorp</b>
<b>Marketing:</b>	<b>Sally Halsey</b>
<b>Membership:</b>	<b>Cindy Allyn</b>
<b>Newsletter:</b>	<b>Jennifer Pryor</b>
<b>Nominating:</b>	<b>Tim Evers</b>
<b>Program:</b>	<b>Paul Ingle</b>
<b>Special Projects:</b>	<b>Joyce Everett</b>

**Treasurers Report (Bill Everett):** No significant changes to report in financial report...and we did not lose money from our recent trip to Salem, it was priced right.

**Corresponding Secretary (Kit Werner):** 17 thank you letters were sent last month: a special thanks to our June program speaker; thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Frank Marco for providing wine for the evening along with John Porter; two notes to outgoing Board members: Helen Keith and Paul Ingle; three notes to those involved with the recently published walking tour brochures (A Mystic Riverside Walking Adventure): David Evans, Jennifer Pryor and Trish Cunningham, Pres. of the Mystic Chamber of Commerce; and 10 thank yous for donations related to membership renewals and to newsletter patrons.

## STANDING COMMITTEES

**Building & Grounds (John Porter):** Annual fire extinguisher preventive maintenance is in progress. The semi-annual HVAC checkup is being scheduled.

**Curatorial (Dorrie Hanna, Collection Manager):** Helen Keith, Dorrie, and Louisa Watrous attended a CT League of History Organizations workshop on June 2. The sessions dealt with various topics to do with images, including dating photographs and using digital images. The display for the Depot Celebration was well received. Jim Streeter took two cartons and 5 scrapbooks for the Groton Historical Society. There has been a lot of research on various queries done by Dorrie and Bettye Noyes. Helen Keith has been reviewing and organizing the Bankel/Brown papers that were accessioned in 1973 but not entered into the database. She has eliminated duplicates and materials not relevant to our Mission Statement. One treasure she found was a large group of "old time" recipes which are now being transcribed with possibilities of having a potential cookbook.

**Education (Tim Evers):** Since the last board meeting there had been visits from 4 school classes which were well received. We plan to have individual teacher names & early mailings of for next year's PVA invitations.



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The Family Activity Centers will be open to local or visiting families on Tuesday mornings and Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoon through September 7th. Karen Havrilla is running our Family Activity Center's summer schedule. On Sunday, June 22nd (from 1-4) we held a Strawberry Festival.

**Outreach (Vacant):** No report.

**Finance (David Evans):** Newly appointed. No report.

**Hospitality (Cindy Allyn):** Once again, our annual meeting's pot luck was a success. We had many people at the pot luck and a bunch who came only to hear the speaker. In total, there were over 70 people.

**Information/Technology (Stephanie Thorp):** Barry did the regular backup on June 1st and responded to one Incident Report which he determined to be "routine" rather than "critical" and will handle.

**Marketing (Sally Halsey):** Summer activities were on the Chamber web site (i.e. Strawberry Festival). Press releases & electronic calendar updates were submitted as well. We received coverage for our annual meeting.

**Membership (Cynthia Allyn):** New members are Gordon Woodbury and Mr. & Mrs. Streeter. Joyce Everett gave names of non-members who participated in the Salem trip to Cindy as potential new members.

**Nominating (Tim Evers):** Officer Election and Committee Chair Appointments were done earlier in the meeting.

**Program (Paul Ingle):** In September the topic will be the Hurricane of '38 (it is the 70th anniversary).

**Special Events (Joyce Everett):** The MRHS successfully completed their two day trip to Salem and Gloucester on June 11 and 12. We had an excellent group of travelers and there were no hitches along the way. We were especially pleased with the whale watch - a great many whales came out to greet us and it was a beautiful day. We expect to have pictures available for those who might like to have them. It was also a financial success.

A number of people had expressed interest in the planned Key West trip beginning November 9th, but since then, we did not meet the minimum number of 15.

**Walking Tour (David Evans):** 300 Walking Tour brochures were distributed to the following locations: the Chamber's Welcome Center, the Information Center at Olde Mystic Village and the Administration Office, the Whaler's Inn, Chico's and the Bermuda Shop (entrance to Gravel Street), the Trade Winds Gallery, Bank Street Books and the Mystic-Noank Library. In addition, 80 copies were distributed at the MRHS Annual Meeting. Trish Cunningham of the Mystic Chamber of Commerce will be asked about their interest in printing more for us (we have paid for nothing so far and greatly appreciate their donation). In addition we received a grant of \$150 from the Woman's Club which can be used for printing and plastic holders. We have received positive feedback as well as constructive suggestions.

The To-Do List includes: Determine further printing options; Establish restocking plan; Obtain waterproof holder and approval to post somewhere close to Gravel St.; and Review suggestions for future editions.

David will contact Carol Kimball about this brochure for any marketing help she might provide through her published articles. He will also make sure the brochure is on our web site as a pdf file.

**House Tours (Sally Halsey)** - The House and Garden Committee will be meeting soon. Sally made a motion for the Mystic River Historical Society to give seed money for House Tour expenses. These monies would be kept in a separate bank account with regular reports provided to our treasurer, Bill Everett. The motion was seconded, and carried unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There will be no meetings during the summer unless something comes up. Next Board meeting is September 15th. The next General Meeting is September 24th.

*The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Marco, Recording Secretary*

*Atty.* **PETER F. STUART**  
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# CALENDAR Notables

**Transcription Club Monday, September 8, 12:30p**  
 at Portersville Academy  
*Bring your lunch & treasured documents for a fun afternoon!*  
 Call Emily Perkins at (860) 536-4779 for more information.

**Membership Meeting Wednesday, Sept. 24, 7:30p**  
 Fellowship Hall of the Mystic Congregational Church  
 MRHS' own Lou Allyn presents an illustrated lecture  
 "What would it be like if the '38 Hurricane happened  
 today instead of 70 years ago?"

**Membership Meeting Wednesday, Oct. 22, 7:30p**

**Membership Meeting Wednesday, Nov. 19, 7:30p**  
 Fellowship Hall of the Mystic Congregational Church  
 Catherine Deichman, speaker..

**No Membership Meeting in December**

**Membership Meeting Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2009 7:30p**

**Membership Meeting Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7:30p**

**Membership Meeting Wednesday, Mar. 25, 7:30p**

**Membership Meeting Wednesday, April 22, 7:30p**

**Membership Meeting Wednesday, May. 27, 7:30p**

**No Membership Meeting in June**

# Newsletter Patrons

<i>Louis &amp; Cynthia Allyn</i>	<i>Mr. &amp; Mrs. William F. Hermann</i>
<i>Jane &amp; Dan Brannegan</i>	<i>Ms. Judith Hicks</i>
<i>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Richard Butler</i>	<i>Mr. &amp; Mrs. David Hinkle</i>
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<i>Mr. &amp; Mrs. David Evans</i>	<i>Frank &amp; Cathy Marco</i>
<i>Mr. &amp; Mrs. William Everett</i>	<i>Nancy &amp; Tom McLoughlin</i>
<i>Franklin's General Store</i>	<i>Captain &amp; Mrs. John Porter</i>
<i>Mary Fuller</i>	<i>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Peter Stuart</i>
<i>Sally Halsey</i>	

# Membership Updates

- C. Allyn

The MRHS members who have mailed in their renewals for the 2008-2009 membership year are listed inside this issue. If you don't see your name, please let me know or send a check to: MRHS, P.O. Box 245, Mystic, CT 06355. Memberships are \$15 Individual, \$30 Family, \$50 for Contributing, \$100 for Benefactor, and \$250 for Sustaining. \$1,000 will make you a member for Life.

We will miss the following member who has died recently, and the Mystic River Historical Society extends sympathy to the family: Anthony P. Halsey member since 1999. We would like to welcome new members - Individual: Charlotte Barnum, Randall Broooks and Gordon Woodbury. Family- Dana & Richard Semeraro and Jim & Irma Streeter. - And thank you to Brendan & Betty O'Donnell for their gift.

Tuesdays 9 A.M. - 12 NOON  
 Wednesdays 1 P.M. - 4 P.M.  
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