On February 24th, Norman Brouwer will join us for the February MRHS membership meeting to present a well-illustrated discussion on early American immigration by sea -- primarily from Europe -- from the Mayflower, to the steamships of the early 20th century. Changing conditions on shipboard will be described, including food, health and sanitation, and the evolution of treatment of immigrants on arrival, using New York as the primary example. Brouwer will also discuss some ways to research immigrant ancestors, and the ships they came in.

Norman Brouwer was the Maritime Historian and Curator of Ship Restoration at South Street Seaport in New York City for over 30 years, after spending time in the Navy and Merchant Marine. He is the author of The International Register of Historic Ships and Steamboats on Long Island Sound. He currently resides in Mystic, Connecticut, where he has gathered historic images from numerous collections and serves as a maritime museum and maritime historic preservation consultant.

History Book Club to be Launched with Library

A meeting to organize a History Book Club under the auspices of the Mystic & Noank Library will be held on Tuesday, March 1st at 7:00 pm in the Ames Room of the Library. It is contemplated that some, and perhaps most of the books read and discussed, will be about local history. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for books to be read, please call Richard Semeraro at (860) 536-3377, or email at RASemeraro04@gmail.com.
Welcome!

We would like to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors: Liz Holland and John Parry. We look forward to their participation in the varied activities of MRHS and encourage you to introduce yourself to them at one of our Membership meetings.

October 2015 Meeting Minutes

The Board of Trustees of the Mystic River Historical Society met on Monday, October 19, 2015. Attendees included: Cindy Allyn, Lou Allyn, Dave Evans, Bill Everett, Lois Glazier, John Parry, Barry Thorp and Stephanie Thorp.

President (L. Allyn): A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the September meeting as published. • The original prints for The Colors of Mystic are carefully stored in a map drawer in the Downes Building. • The annual fire alarm test was successful.

Corresponding Secretary (C. Allyn): No letters since 9/15.

Treasurer (B. Thorp): Submitted report covering the treasurer’s activities during the period 4 September through 16 October 2015. At this time all deposits have been made in the bank and all bills are paid current. The Treasurer’s account books are reconciled with the Chelsea Groton Bank statements. Expenses for these months are mostly non-discretionary commitments that include payments for utilities, building security, postage and payments to our curatorial staff. No unusual expenses for the period. The present balance in the Chelsea Groton checking account is positive. P&L vs Budget and Balance Sheet reports for the period were accepted to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

Curatorial (L. Allyn/D. Hanna): The Curatorial Committee met on October 19. Holiday closings at the Downes Building were announced for November 11 (Veterans Day), the week of Thanksgiving, the week of Christmas and the week of New Years. MRHS will have a display at the Union Baptist Church 250th Anniversary Gala on November 7. Issues with the Virtual Exhibit module of PastPerfect have been resolved. Dorrie will investigate options for replacing our dehumidifier which is over 25 years old and no longer functioning properly. A problem with Past Perfect Virtual Exhibit was solved with a patch to the program provided by the company.

Finance (D. Evans): First draft of 2016 Budget was discussed.

Information Technology (S. Thorp): On 2 October 2015, computer updates & backups were performed. All equipment & software appears to be in good condition and functioning as designed. Backup for the Past Perfect database files & working files was done and removed off site for security. • System Administrator began the transition to the new Windows 10 operating system with October backups. The operating system on the laptop computer was upgraded to Windows 10 and appears to be functioning normally. The office staff has been advised of the update with the suggestion that they “play” with the new system and familiarize themselves with it. Other computers will be upgraded over the next couple of months.

Newsletter (J. Pryor): Copy due the Friday after board meeting.

Program & Membership (M. Austin): Speakers are Mark Starr for October and Kate Dimancescu for December. Committee meetings will be held the first Thursday of every other month.

P&M Subcommittee of Hospitality & Membership (C. Allyn): Responses to the dues renewal reminder letters sent to 50 members have been coming in.

Publicity/PR (S. Thorp): Press releases are being sent out before each Members Meeting.

Next meeting November 16, 2015, 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Allyn, Recording Secretary

A Bit about New Board Member, John Parry...

My wife, Julia, and I have been Mystic residents for less than one year, although we have owned our home here for more than 20 years. My route to Mystic was circuitous, starting in Vancouver, Canada where I was born. Graduate school took me to Berkeley, California, where Julia and I met. From Berkeley, I joined the Danbury, CT, geophysics R&D group of Newmont Mining Corporation.

When Newmont moved its corporate headquarters from New York to Denver 27 years ago, we left Connecticut but always remembered its history, beauty, and waters, knowing that one day we would return. In the interim, my work and our other travels took us to many parts of the world, including two years in Melbourne, Australia in the mid 1990’s.

We have a married son with two sons and a married daughter with two daughters. This June my wife and I will celebrate our 50th anniversary.

Mystic River Historical Society Mission Statement

The Society exists to collect, arrange, exhibit and preserve records, papers, photographs, artifacts, relics and related archival materials that document the history of the people who lived in the area around the Mystic River from the first settlement in 1654 to the present.

Officers: President - Lou Allyn • Vice President - Bill Everett
Treasurer - Barry Thorp • Corresponding & Recording Secretary - Cindy Allyn

The Newsletter of the Mystic River Historical Society is published six times annually: September, October, November-December, January-February, March-April and May-June • Box 243 Mystic, CT 06355

Issues of the newsletter are available for online viewing at www.mystichistory.org
Thank you, Marcus Maronn, for your donation of a mounted print of an 1866 map of Mystic. Really easy to read and great for research because we can leave the fragile original map safely put away. Interesting to note some of the street names. Did you know there was once a “Science Avenue” in Mystic?

Thank you, Mark Turner, for donating an American Flyer “Mystic” model train station. It’s similar to one already in our collection, but this one still retains the interior mechanism for the lights and whistle sound.

Thank you to all our donors! These are just two of many items we added to our collections in 2015. We have a wonderful range of documents, photos and objects related to the history of Mystic. So... how do we share some of our thousands of items with researchers and other history lovers?? One way is by using Virtual Exhibit....

Virtual Exhibit converts selected collection records & images from Past Perfect, our cataloging database, into HTML pages for posting online. We select catalog records to share and the software creates the HTML, resized and watermarked images, and related files. We can then upload to our website where everyone can view them. We’ve set up a number of different “exhibits” which you can view by going to our webpage, www.mystichistory.org, and clicking on the Virtual Exhibits link.

We’ve shared some of our photos just for general interest, for example pictures from our Stinson and Dickinson Collections. Other online collections focus on a specific topic, such as trolleys in Mystic, or a specific family. Currently, we’re expanding the list of Mystic families with “exhibits”. A Google search should lead on-line researchers to our virtual exhibits. In turn, perhaps, they will have information to share with us!

One of the first “family exhibits” to be set up features material donated to us by members of the Coogan-Marshall family. The Coogan-Marshall group is quite a large collection [over 1100 items] that reflects the activities and life events of a Mystic family over the last 100 years. Just as we did with The Brown Family Papers, the Allyn Collection, the Haley Collection, several Fish Family collections and others, we accepted boxes and tubs of papers and photos, arranged them in an orderly fashion, entered them into our database and boxed them carefully to preserve them.

Why? To support our Mission as an organization: The Society exists to collect, arrange, exhibit and preserve records, papers, photographs, artifacts, relics and related archival materials that document the history of the people who lived in the area around the Mystic River from the first settlement in 1654 to the present.

With so many items to work on, and other projects popping up, we’re still not 100% done processing the Coogan-Marshall material but it has already been utilized several times. Images were supplied to The Nature & Heritage Center at Coogan Farm for their grand opening and they have also referred to the Collection for background information. Coogan-Marshall family members who live out of town have been able to view (and sometimes identify) pictures in the Collection.

The Internet makes it possible for the MRHS, an organization with a small staff & limited hours, to share our resources worldwide. Social media is another aspect of this so next issue we might consider the presence of MRHS on Face Book.

**Tip:** Remember, bold blue text is hyperlinked for online readers. Click on text to be taken directly to websites with more information!

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**The Modern Grill: on Facebook & in Online Archives**

The Mystic River Historical Society’s Facebook page is a great opportunity for online images, chat & memories: A community of over a thousand Mystic fans “like” the page, with infinite possibilities for sharing. By special request, Dorrie recently featured an undated archive image of W. Main Street’s “Modern Grill.” Over 40 people liked the photo, and almost 30 shared it with friends. A discussion ensued about the date and memories about the restaurant & bowling alley....

The cars parked in front suggest the photo could have been taken in the 1930s. Further online research in Google News Archives (click here for a how-to) shows The Modern Grill getting mention in The New London Day through over a half century of history! From a lunch counter payment kerfuffle in January 1920, through business meetings & banquets in the 1930s & ’40s, to bowling league records in the ’50s, and advertising & ownership in the late ’60s & ’70s.

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**Thank you,** Dorrie Hanna, Collections Manager
The MIYC tennis tournaments seemed to boil down to the father-and-son Gleddilh’s, who believed more in the side-hand slice, and the Bobby & Bill Jones brothers who subscribed to the overhand power swing... The tournaments were easy to run and quite interesting. Of the activities available at the club, however, tennis was the least utilized – perhaps a result of the condition of the “old courts.”

We had a number of junior kids who came down to the club almost every day to hang out and participate in whatever was going on. You were supposed to be at least eight years old to do this as an unescorted kid. Most days we got about a dozen or so in this category. If it was Wednesday we’d either Kitten race, and most of the excess kids got scooped up as extra crew or helpers to me. Other week days we would always swim at least twice – morning and afternoon and maybe play a little tennis or informal sailing. If it rained we’d play board games or card games inside.

One of the youngest kids who came down unescorted was Jackie Baum. His mother had mentioned he was a “little underdog.” But he was full of beans for a little guy and since his mother worked or had something to do every day I didn’t worry about his age. He was one of the “little guys” I’d sometimes take out in a Kitten for sailing instruction, although he was already a pretty good independent racer and able to give command direction to a much older kid as his crew. It was late in the season when I found out that Jackie was only five years old.

Hugh, Emma, Josie, young Hugh, and Penny Cole had the most colorful craft on the island – The “Bohemian” – a heavy wooden gaff-rigged sloop of over 30 feet with a bow-sprit, no power, no head, and no lights except a kerosene lantern masthead over 30 feet with a bow-sprit, no power, no head, and no lights except a kerosene lantern masthead – emergent & sub-ground is a result of storm damage... and perhaps our readers could identify more...!

Due to the welcoming nature of the Cole family and the seemingly unlimited capacity of this craft (there was always room for a few more) the Bohemian was probably used on more occasions and by more people than any boat on the island. Its use for special occasions was legendary.

Young Hugh remembers their Sunday brunches on board. A family friend had brought Gov. Thomas E. Dewey of New York to visit for the weekend, so they took him out on the Bohemian for brunch. He was a somewhat flashy kind of guy (someone described him as to be a grade B movie actor). Standing on the Bohemian’s ancient deck viewing Fishers Island with his impeccable hair and tetramatonic moustache was too much for the scantily clad exuberant young teen-age girls Sarah Moore and Josie Cole who apparently were not impressed with his importance. They “playfully” pushed him overboard and jumped in and dunked him. After that, according to Hugh, he became somewhat less sprezzaturnian.

Another of those occasions was the annual Harvard Yale crew race held at the mid-point between the rivals – the Thames River in New London. This was one of the oldest intercollegiate athletic events (if not the oldest) in the nation.

At the beginning of a typical race weekend, young Hugh and a willing compatriot or two (like me) would sail the Bohemian over the afternoon before the race and moor near the finish line. We’d leave the oar-propelled dinghy hidden under a coal dock or other convenient landing and be met by Josie or others with a car for the return trip to Masons island.

As the afternoon progressed the Bohemian would become more and more populated with reveling crew race fans. When we reached near capacity of perhaps 40 or more, people would be hanging over the side and the Bohemian’s freeboard would reduce. A family friend had brought Gov. Thomas E. Dewey of New York to visit for the weekend, so they took him out on the Bohemian for brunch. He was a somewhat flashy kind of guy (someone described him as to be a grade B movie actor). Standing on the Bohemian’s ancient deck viewing Fishers Island with his impeccable hair and tetramatonic moustache was too much for the scantily clad exuberant young teen-age girls Sarah Moore and Josie Cole who apparently were not impressed with his importance. They “playfully” pushed him overboard and jumped in and dunked him. After that, according to Hugh, he became somewhat less sprezzaturnian.

The race was always scheduled for evening slack-tide around 6:00 PM or so. So the next day we’d have “transporting” duty starting about 3 PM. Those arriving by car would park near the coal dock and be transported by the young “rowers” from the coal dock to the Bohemian in the tiny dinghy. Thus it was a balancing act of just where to moor the Bohemian in the first place – closer to the finish line for the cocktaiers viewing enjoyment or closer to the coal dock for the rowers ease in transporting. The worst maneuver of the day would occur early when Hugh Senior, having just arrived would set his Harvard flag, and then decide we were too far from the finish line...! He would then insist on repositioning our carefully selected mid-point mooring spot to another point much, much closer to the finish line... “Ahh...that’s much, much better” as he poured himself his first martini... and we silently fumed.

As the afternoon progressed the Bohemian would become more and more populated with reveling crew race fans. When we reached near capacity of perhaps 40 or more, people would be hanging over the side and the Bohemian’s freeboard would reduce to just a few inches making everyone wonder what would happen if a power boat of any proportions with a significant wake went by.

Sometimes our nearly sparsely populated craft also flying a Harvard flag would, at this point, notice the Bohemian’s overcrowding plight and invite a few of the Bohemian crowd to come on over. This saved the day, and as more and more Cole friends arrived they would be quickly diverted to nearby craft flying Harvard flags, the occupants of which by now were on their fourth martini and ready for anything.

Since my father had gone to Harvard for his master’s degree after graduating from the Naval Academy, my parents were always invited to this festive occasion on the overcrowded Bohemian. Sometimes I’d see my younger brother Jim smiling and waving from the largest yacht in the area...
Brownie Moore, the eldest of the four Moore children, bought and restored a 1934 Buick roadster with rumble seat. It was quite functional and rather handsome after restoration. Brownie and Josey Cole and Sissy (Sarah) Moore and I decided to inaugurate the Buick by rumbling across the old Gold Star Bridge to Quaker Hill to the outdoor drive-in movie establishment there – Josie and Brownie in the front and Sissy & I in the rumble seat.

Some drive-ins charged by the car-full and some, like Quaker Hill, by the person, so it seemed like fun for Sissy and me to scrunch down and pull the rumble lid almost closed and hope to get away with only two admissions. The observant ticket seller announced that the rumble seat lid was ajar and solicitously slammed it shut with his fist, leaving Sissy and me locked in. Now, if you are a young man who has never been locked in a rumble seat with a shapely, soft, slightly older and considerably more experienced female, it is something I highly recommend.

Of course once the Buick was in its position on row 19, aimed at the giant screen, with portable speaker hooked onto the window, Brownie finally opened the rumble lid, giving us our freedom. Strangely, I don’t remember a thing about the movie. Sissy and I were pretty much inseparable for the rest of the summer.

Back at the Yacht Club we had formal “field day” type swimming races once per month. This included one relay race which involved putting on a sweatshirt and dungarees, swimming from the dock to the raft where you would take off the sweatshirt and dungarees and the next team-member would put them on and race back to the dock and so on.

This was a popular event, and the mothers & grandmothers would line the sea wall with their rocking chairs & knitting needles and talk about... whatever they talk about, while waiting for the action.

Since I officiated, I stood on the dock in my bathing suit and tee-shirt with my clipboard and starting whistle. Each of the team sweatshirts and dungarees had to be large enough to accommodate the largest kids so they were quite large and quite heavy when they got wet.

Jackie Baum, our smallest and without doubt our youngest was on the raft waiting for his relay team-mate to arrive. The other three teams arrived first and were quick to shed their outfits and help their teammates at them. The opposing teams had all dived in by the time Jackie’s teammate arrived – and quickly shed his outfit. Jackie put the wet, wet clothing on and looked like a Lilliputian in the Giant’s clothing – I quickly realized this was not good... He dove in. And sank like a rock....

As I dropped the clipboard and did my longest racing dive off the upper level of the dock, out of the corner of my eye, I could see the ladies on the sea-wall gasp and rise as one. It took about eight high speed strokes (in just a few seconds), a quick underwater dive, and I had Jackie by the collar and pulled him to the surface. He sputtered, and gasped but he looked OK, so I sat him on the edge of the raft, slapped his back a few times, and started pushing the clothes off of him, he said between coughs, “What did you do that for? I was going to push off from the bottom.” That kid had spunk.

So I swam the clothing back to the dock while he swam along side. Jackie’s team finished last... but they finished. Eleven years later, at the age of 16, Jackie was killed in a heartbreaking teenage automobile accident.

The final event in the Town of Stonington week-long Tercentennial celebration was a boat parade up the Mystic River. We entered the junior yacht club as “The Cat and Seven Kittens”. The entire junior yacht club was distributed in the seven Kittens who, in turn, were pulled by me and my resolute crew of Sissy Moore & Josey Cole in a borrowed 24 foot cat boat with our 5 hp Evenrude for propulsion. It was slow going but OK until we neared the bascule bridge where the constricted outgoing tide became too much for the Evenrude and we began to go backward. Fortunately, G.S. Allyn was passing by in his large power boat, the original Nylla, and seeing the problem he threw us a line and towed us through the bridge.

When G.S. cast us off I heard him say “Jim… Em’... Do you see those children were not wearing shoes?”

You can imagine my surprise as we neared the committee boat and identified the parade judges who turned out to be my father in full dress uniform including his sword (a late replacement for the Governor who had to cancel), Charlie Brooks dressed like the Mayor of London complete with top hat, and the First Selectman who had definitely been upstaged by only a coat and tie.

We told the kids to “Meow” as we passed the judges and they did that and more... In fact they really got into it... and included scratching, hissing and clawing as well as meowing.

We won the grand prize! A $25 war bond (which is probably sitting in some ex-club treasurer’s old files still earning interest). Both my father and Charlie Brooks recused themselves from the judging, leaving the decision to the First Selectman who was apparently a cat lover since he said we won hands down.

The legendary clashes between the men of strong character – G.S. Allyn, Blunt White, and Duncan Henderson.

Weell, during that summer there were many more incidents and episodes like:

- The line-squall that nearly took out the Kittens fleet in the middle of a race (we just squeaked back in time)
- The Napatree Point overnight adventure...
- The Napauhre Point overnight adventure...
- The legendary clashes between the men of strong character – G.S. Allyn, Blunt White, and Duncan Henderson.

But we simply don’t have time to do justice to these stories. For me, the summer of 1949 was indeed unforgettable.

It was customary to give a “pooled tip” to the councilor at the end of the season so the councilor never knew who gave what… My “tip” that year exceeded my year’s salary… I never knew who... or what precipitated such generosity.

~ E.R.P.
July, 2015
Due to frequent weather concerns, the programming committee has voted to discontinue the January membership meeting.

Wednesday, February 24th, 2016
Membership Meeting at Mystic Congregational Church Hall
7:00p refreshments & socializing, 7:30p program • Open to public
"Immigrant Ancestor Ships & Conditions" with Norman Brouwer
Early American immigration by sea - from the Mayflower to 20th c.

Tuesday, March 1st, 2016 at 7pm
History Book Club Meeting
Ames Room of the Mystic & Noank Library
Initial meeting to organize a History Book Club in conjunction with the Mystic Noank Library. Local & general book topics to be explored.
Richard Semeraro at (860) 536-3377 or RASemeraro04@gmail.com

We have several new members - - they are: Elizabeth & Lynn Holland - Life membership, David and Keli Levine at the Benefactor level, as well as Julia Constantine with an Individual membership. We also regret the passing of Dorothy Leib, a member since 2006.

We will be sending out our 2016 membership renewal notices towards the end of January

~ Cindy Allyn, Membership