In March - Mystic Ships and the American Civil War

Bill Peterson joins us on Wednesday March 27th at 7:30pm to present "Mystic Ships and the American Civil War." During the four years of the Civil War Mystic built and owned ships were involved in nearly all the theaters of action. Nearly eighty vessels were built at Mystic during the war including 57 steam vessels and most participated in one way or another as gunboats, troop and supply transports, or on blockade duty along the southern coast. Bill will discuss the careers of just a few of these vessels including the ironclad Galena, the wooden gunboats Varuna and Albatross and even a few vessels that saw service in the Confederate cause. The talk will bring some due attention to the waterborne aspects of the war in which Mystic men and ships played an important but often overlooked role.

William N. Peterson is Curator Emeritus of Mystic Seaport Museum and a founding member of MRHS. He has lectured and written extensively about the Connecticut maritime experience. His book, “Mystic Built” was chosen for the prestigious John Lyman Award and Bill has also been recognized by the Photographic Historical Society of New England for his work. Recently, he was the historical advisor for the “Mystic Streetscape” and he currently chairs the collections committee of the New London County Historical Society and sits on the collections advisory board of Norwich’s Slater Memorial Museum.

In April - Georgiana Fulton: An Unsung Tour de Force

Susan McGee Bailey met her first ‘best friend’ at the age of nine and was new to the area: Miss Georgiana Fulton’s house was on the way to the school bus stop and Susan passed her ramshackle cottage and flourishing gardens daily. The flowers sparked a conversation that ignited a friendship & discussions that continued beyond school years and the scope of Mystic.

Georgiana Fulton (1869 - 1967), was an independent thinker, artist, and the last teacher in the one room schoolhouse on Mason’s Island.

Having recently begun to further research Miss Fulton’s life and career, Susan Bailey will talk about the results as well as the many stories Miss Fulton shared with her as a child. The stories reveal much about Mason’s Island in the 1920s and ‘30s as well as the early years of the Mystic Art Association and tantalizing aspects of Miss Fulton’s life before she came to Connecticut, including her origins in Shreveport, LA and her years in Paris, France before World War I.

Susan McGee Bailey received a BA in History from Wellesley College, an MA and Ph.D from the University of Michigan and held a post doctoral fellowship in Public Health from Johns Hopkins.
Regular readers of this column (voluntary and involuntary) probably expect that at some point each month I am inclined to make an effort to define the reasons we all enjoy history, the study of known events, people and places. A recent trip to Australia, however, confronted me with the vastness of history of which I’m unaware. And that recognition led me to wonder if history can cease to exist. Think about that old conundrum—if a tree falls in a forest and nobody is around to hear it, does it make a sound? Yes, I understand that the falling tree causes an atmospheric disruption, propagating waves that could be heard if somebody happened to be there when the tree fell. But, if no ears happen to be in the way before those waves ebb and fade away, can we say for sure it’s a “sound”?

Think about that falling tree as a historical fact or event. Are forgotten or unknown facts the unheard sound waves of history? If we are unaware of them, when the event “waves” have ebbed and faded, have they ceased to exist? Did they ever exist?

The question is not as silly as it sounds. To the extent we are unaware of history, we cannot pretend to understand that part of the past. What we do not understand, we cannot synthesize with the present, including our own lives. And an inability to synthesize condemns us to mistakes when confronted by a current event whose foundation is built on those unknown or unstudied matters.

So, back to my revelation regarding how much history I don’t have a clue about. My own personal ignorance of most of Australia’s history is not, of course, universal. In other words, one can find literature on the subject (although, as Bill Bryson notes in his entertaining book about the place, “In a Sunburned Country”, not as much as you might think). However, it’s literature that finds few readers in this country or just about anywhere else, for that matter. Bryson amusingly reports that all kinds of inane and thoroughly unimportant items are detailed in the New York Times while that august publication routine-ly ignores virtually everything that concerns Australia.

What was the singular historical fact that sent me reeling down the forest path? In 1967, the Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt, against advice from friends and associates who were with him, went for a swim in the ocean south of Melbourne (pronounced “Melbun”, by the way—remember that whenever you find yourself in the company of Australians) and promptly disappeared. Good grief. How could I be so ignorant of what was a singular historical event (I’ll pretend I was too young to be aware of it at the time)?

Let’s all agree that fundamental ignorance about a place like Australia probably will not result in any immediate global mis-fortune. Australia is, after all, one of the friendliest, most relaxed places on the planet and the people there, for the most part, don’t particularly care if the rest of us spend time thinking about them. But there are many places in the world for which that cannot be said. In other words, to make sense of our “globalized” world today, we need to know as much about the world’s past as possible.

Being truly world-knowledgeable is a daunting, if not impossible undertaking, but we can each do our own part to add to understanding by frequently taking a walk in the historical forest to minimize the number of soundless events. That is the primary mission of organizations like the Mystic River Historical Society, which seeks to preserve and disseminate the stories of our own little patch of the forest. This is not, however, an appeal for donations (although they are always welcome!). It’s a reminder that we welcome visitors—there is much to read and review at our facility. Give us a call and come in to look around.

By the way, one can’t help but admire Australians, who have an unequaled sense of humor. How did they immediately memorialize Holt after his death? By naming a swimming complex for him—the Harold Holt Swim Centre. You just have to love people who think like that, don’t you?

Harold Holt (1908-1967), exhibits a classic Aussie sense of humor in this image from a family movie taken the year of his death and donated to Australian National Archives in 2007. An avid swimmer and maritime sportsman, Holt spent 32 years in Parliament before becoming the Prime Minister of Australia for just under two years until his disappearance in notoriously treacherous waters off of Victoria, on December 17, 1967.

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**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 1634 to the present.

- **Officers:** President - Lou Allyn • Vice President - Bill Everett
  - Treasurer - Barry Thorp • Corresponding Secretary - Lois Glazer • Recording Secretary • vacant

The Newsletter of the Mystic River Historical Society is published six times annually: September, October, November-December, January-February, March-April and May • Box 245 Mystic, CT 06355

Issues of the newsletter are available for online viewing at [www.mystichistory.org](http://www.mystichistory.org)
Along the battle lines from Virginia to Missouri, activity is increasing after the winter’s lull. The Mystic Pioneer publishes a list of places the editor predicts will “become scenes of deadly conflict before the rebellion is put down,” including the Duck River in Tennessee, Vicksburg and Port Hudson on the Mississippi, the important port of Wilmington, and, eventually, Richmond. Since much of the Union strategy is now focused on capturing the Mississippi, the paper prints a Table of Distances of the mileage from point to point along the river from New Orleans to St. Louis, “which might be found useful at the present time.” The Mystic boys in the field are ready to fight. Captain Randall writes from Camp Parapet, Louisiana, describing Company K’s impatience for “orders to break camp and march to Port Hudson, to help our boys there open this great river.”

As the war enters its third year, Army enlistments have fallen off sharply. Many states failed to meet their quotas under the 1862 militia drafts. Throughout the North there is the general feeling that all the men able to leave home, family, and trade have already gone, and there is simply no one else who can be spared for the war. In response, the Enrollment Act, passed by the Congress at the beginning of March, establishes the nation’s first federal draft.

The decline in enlistments back at home does not lessen morale among soldiers in the field. With state elections approaching, the men of the 5th Regiment address a proclamation to “The Citizens of Connecticut” asking their communities to support the war effort by electing the Republican slate. Unable to vote themselves, they ask their fellow Nutmeggers to “be true to her sons” by continuing to support Governor Buckingham and his party, and renouncing the Democrats. “We appeal to you to put down treason where it confronts you, and thereby strengthen the arm of every one of your loyal sons in the field,” they urge their families and neighbors.

Maritime matters continue to be of deep local interest. Rumors regarding the whereabouts of the Confederate Raiders Alabama and Florida abound, to the alarm of Mystic’s ship owners and sailors. The successes of the blockade-runners in entering Southern ports are closely followed. Mystic vessels and masters are part of the government’s effort to turn British popular opinion away from support of the Confederacy by delivering supplies for the suffering Lancashire mill workers, whose livelihoods once depended on Southern cotton. Despite the hazards of war at sea, the Maxson & Fish yard launches a lovely 1200 ton clipper, Cremorne, to run in the Pacific and East India trade under Mystic Captain Isaac D. Gates.

The war is good for business. The many orders for new vessels at Mystic’s shipyards send ripples through the local economy. The new workers coming into town cannot find housing. Many find rooms in private homes, and widows and soldiers’ wives are able to supplement their income by taking in boarders. Reliance Machine and other employers place advertisements for “persons having tenements to let.” The Mystic Pioneer urges carpenters and builders to take advantage of this opportunity. “Neat, small houses are what are wanted,” the paper advises, “and if built we think that twenty-five or more could be filled with first class tenants, immediately.” Some businessmen, such as William Maxson, take matters into their own hands and build tenements for their own workers.

The Mallory yard celebrates the launch of yet another vessel, the screw steamer Governor Buckingham, with engines and boiler supplied by the Mystic Iron Works. Launches from the Mystic shipyards are now occurring monthly. The foundries, riggers, and spar makers share in the boom times.

Mystic’s thriving economy draws veterans looking for work. A Mr. H. W. Luther, a disabled soldier, advertises in the local paper for pupils interested in learning the guitar, at $2.00 per lesson. Mr. Luther’s circumstances gain him an endorsement from the editor of the Pioneer: “We learn he has served his country faithfully, and we therefore hope to hear of his meeting with success.”

The war itself spurs the growth of new businesses. Express services promise to deliver mail & packages to units at the front while avoiding the slow, overloaded US Mail. “Agents” advertise their services to help soldiers, or their survivors, navigate the often difficult process of filing for pensions, collecting unpaid bounties or back pay, or claiming prize money for cargoes of seized blockade-runners.

Beyond Mystic, there are grim reminders that the war is not all about profit. Although the local units are not presently involved in battle, the list of local boys hospitalized or captured grows ever longer. Several soldiers have been discharged due to illness. Some of them, like Private Charles Cordner of Mystic Bridge, die soon after returning home. There is bad news on the water as well. The medium clipper bark Lapwing, launched by the Mallory shipyard in 1859, was captured by the Confederate raider Florida in the Atlantic Ocean, armed, and renamed Oreto. With Confederate officers in command, the Oreto captured one Northern ship before being abandoned and burned by her crew off Barbados. The thought of one of their own proud Mystic-built ships in the employ of the Confederacy dismay the people of Mystic, and demonstrates how the war can turn things upside down all too quickly.
From Education Outreach:
Thank you, “Mr. Avery”  Cathy Mauritz

Our third grade teacher, Tim Evers aka "Mr. Avery", has decided that he is retiring from Portersville Academy. We wish to thank Tim for his many years volunteering for this position – he will be missed by all.

As a result of Tim’s retirement, we will only run the first grade program this Spring. Kay Janney has agreed to be "Miss Palmer". Thank you Kay!

Tim said that he would be willing to help out a new teacher by describing how he taught third grade lessons and managed the classroom as it was back in the 1840’s. If you or someone you know would be interested in portraying "Mr. or Miss Avery", or volunteering with the "downstairs" portion of the program, please contact Cathy Mauritz at cemauritz@yahoo.com.

Thoughts On Sharing  Lou Allyn

Last month in her From the Collections Manager column Dorrie Hanna said regarding assisting local researchers, "It’s all part of what makes Mystic a special place to live with a history worth knowing and sharing." I want to emphasize that sharing is something all of us can do: MRHS is constantly looking for new way to share our collections and knowledge with the world and we strongly encourage you to share your history with us. For example, Virgil Huntley sent me this email regarding the poem in last month’s issue - "The poem is by Lydia (Huntley) Sigourney called the Sweet Singer of Hartford. Her father, Ezekiel Huntley worked with Benedict Arnold for Dr. Daniel Latrop of Norwich. " Virgil’s ancestor, David Huntley was a brother to Ezekiel Huntley. Lydia was brought up in the Doctor’s household.

Another member, Laurie Capener recently sent us from Utah a package of materials about George Perkins which she thought might be useful to the GeoHistorian project. Laurie wrote "I LOVE doing my family genealogy and I try to make trips back to Mystic whenever I’m able to do so. Five years ago I was able to visit the Colonial Indian Research Center and find original correspondence from my ancestor Amos Clift II explaining about how his ship had been pirated and how he had been imprisoned for three months in a foreign country. Months after I left, the Center was flooded, and I can’t help but think if I hadn’t found that letter it might have been lost in the flood. ...I am ever so grateful for the G. W. Blunt Library and of course the Mystic Historical Society. Janet Godwin was (I miss her) and Dorrie Hanna have always been so helpful to me. In addition, I’ve been able to go through our family material (on site) to add and correct the names on photographs, etc. I wish I lived there, you’d never get me to leave the building I’m afraid! I’d love to volunteer and do whatever I could to help out."

From Collections:
Researching House Histories  Dorrie Hanna

One of the most common requests for assistance we get at MRHS is for information about house histories and how to order a dated plaque. Here’s a little background information on this topics.

The original House History project began back in the 1970s under the auspices of the now defunct Mystic Junior Woman’s Club. The MRHS is very fortunate to have their research on file at the Downes Building, and it is also available at the Mystic & Noank Library. If your house has, or used to have, a plaque showing the date when it was built and the name and profession of the original owner, the research that was done to establish this information should be available in these files.

If you think your house should have a plaque, but it does not, there are reasons why this might be so:
- The cut off construction date for a house to receive a plaque from the Juniors’ project was 1900.
- In some cases the researcher(s) could not conclusively trace the chain of title for the property and recommended that no plaque be created. So, as good as our files may be, they may not help you.

If you’d like to research your own house history, a helpful guide from the Smithsonian Institution Natural Museum of American History is available at this link: amhistory.si.edu/house/pdfs/webhouseguide.pdf.

Locally, both the Town of Groton and the Town of Stonington have some property information available online via their GIS (Government Information Service) sites. You should be aware that the construction date noted for a home on these sites is often estimated, so don’t assume they are correct. The Groton Town Clerk’s office has recently made some property records back to 1964 available on line at gis.groton-ct.gov as well through the Connecticut Town Clerks Portal. The Stonington site is gis.stonington-ct.gov.

If you do successfully discover when your house was built, and by whom, we’d love to have a copy of your research and, of course, you’ll want to know how to get a plaque made. The MRHS does not supply the plaques. Homeowners may order them by contacting Brian’s Signs at (860) 536-4439.

An original to the 1970s House History project, this plaque itself shows signs of antiquity. It marks a nearly 170-year-old cape-style home on Pearl Street in Mystic.

At the time the house was built, Pearl Street began at what is now known as Clift Street. At its intersection with West Main, the road was called "Core Street," as it ran along a small inlet to the current-day St. Mark’s Church. "Core Street" can be seen on an 1866 town map. The inlet was filled by the turn of the last century only to make partial reappearances during any high-water conditions.
The Liberty Pole and Cap  Dorrie Hanna

Have you ever noticed a small gold object at the top of the new Liberty Pole on the east side of the river in Mystic? It represents a Phrygian cap. The previous Liberty Pole was taken down in 2012. The cap from that pole has been donated to the Mystic River Historical Society by the Mystic Flag Committee (see www.mysticlibertypole.com).

Mystic's first Liberty Pole was erected in 1862, when the Civil War was raging, on the Groton side of the Mystic River. It was moved to the Stonington side of the river in 1876, but it was destroyed by a fire in 1885. Shortly thereafter, a new pole was erected at the present site, at the intersection of East Main Street and Holmes Street. Included with the sculptured cap in their donation are two bronze plaques and an old wooden halyard cleat.

This style of cap, now frequently referred to as a Liberty Cap, is soft and cone shaped, fitting closely around the head and characterized by a pointed crown that curls forward. It originated in the ancient country of Phrygia in Asia Minor and appears in ancient Greek art as a type of head wear worn by Orientals. In Rome, the Phrygian style cap was worn by emancipated slaves as a symbol of their freedom. It became a common popular emblem of liberty in late eighteenth century France when it was adopted by the Revolutionaries as "the red cap of liberty." It continues to be associated with the French national allegorical figure of Liberté. In the colonies it was used by the Sons of Liberty as early as 1765. During the American Revolution, particularly in the early years, many of the soldiers who fought for the Patriot cause wore knitted liberty caps of red, sometimes with the motto "Liberty" or "Liberty or Death" knitted into the band. This style of cap was traditional in the North East (having been popular with the French Voyagers) and became immensely popular during the Revolution. The U.S. Army has, since 1778, utilized a "War Office Seal" in which the motto "This We'll Defend" is displayed directly over a Phrygian cap on an upturned sword.

Quiambaug/Mistuxet Valley  Lou Allyn

Two years ago Bryan Bentz told me about a website he created to convey the history of the Quiambaug/Mistuxet Valley – qb.mindhenge.org All it took was a quick look and I became fascinated by the historical detail presented about a small area of Stonington that I knew very little about. I had hoped that Brain would be able to present his research and technical work at an MRHS membership meeting but he was unable to find the time. Then the other day it struck me that the next best thing would be for me to review the website and encourage you to explore it on your own.

Since people review books, movies, operas, symphonies, TV shows all the time I thought it might be appropriate and interesting to review an historical website. With that in mind what are some of the criteria to consider in such a review?

1. Is it easy to use (user friendly) in terms of navigation and search?
2. Are its looks and design attractive?
3. Is there a good balance between images & text?
4. Are there sufficient maps and diagrams?
5. Are source references provided?
6. Are there useful links to other sites?
7. Is there a story that weaves it all together?
8. What is the degree of completeness and detail?

You can spend many an enjoyable hour browsing from section to section or reading through from start to finish. A printout of this site is 54 pages long, not including many additional "side" pages, so there is a great deal of content. It rates highly on the eight criteria and is well worth your attention and is an excellent example of what a motivated person can create and make available to the world at no charge.

The home page starts with Bryan’s introduction: “While I’ve written the first round of this set of pages, I’d like it to become a wider project, involving anyone who is interested. Indeed, eventually I hope this project takes on a life of its own, and continues for many years to come, even after I can no longer be involved.” The table of contents has 28 listings which give a wide range of topics to investigate. Before diving in be sure to read section 1.1 Motivation to develop a sense of the story Bryan tells and how an “amateur” historian working on his own can create a significant presentation of an area of local history. After that, happy reading.
January Meeting Minutes

The Board of Trustees of the Mystic River Historical Society met on Monday, January 14, 2013 at the Mystic Noank Library. Board members present were Aimeé Allaire, Lou Allyn, David Evans, Bill Everett, Lois Glazer, Alan Greener, Cathy Marco, Betty O’Donnell, Richard Semeraro, Barry Thorp and Stephanie Thorp. Guest: Cindy Allyn.

The meeting was called to order by President Allyn at 7pm. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of the previous Board meeting.

President’s Report (Lou Allyn): Lou expressed high appreciation for a generous donation by Jim and Jennifer Kimenker. He noted that everyone’s annual reports are an opportunity to summarize progress and events during 2012 and asked that they be sent to him by the end of the month.

Corresponding (Lois Glazer): Two letters were written since the last meeting.

Treasurer’s Report (Barry Thorp): Income & expense for November and December were minimal. All bills for fiscal year 2012 have been paid, deposits made and checkbook reconciled. • A suggestion was made that MRHS contribute some amount to the Mystic Noank Library in appreciation of the use of the Ames Room for our board meetings. A motion was made, seconded and passed to donate $100 cash as well as $100 in books, etc. for the next Silent Auction.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Buildings & Grounds (Alan Greener): It is hoped that the new snow plow service will do a better job next time and not plow the parking lot stones onto the borders. A suggestion was made to consider paving the parking lot. Alan and Barry will attend the next meeting of the Historic District Commission for a review of reinstallation of the Portersville Academy rain gutters.

Curatorial (Lou Allyn & Dorrie Hanna): The Curatorial Committee met today. An analysis of PastPerfect year to year statistics shows that we are at last caught up with cataloging our entire collection and have made many improvements in the quality of our data which will improve the ability of researchers to find what they are interested in.

Education/Outreach (Cathy Mauritz): No report.

Finance (David Evans): A detailed report of our Vanguard funds 2012 results was emailed to the Board. The overall internal rate of return for the year was 11.1%. The next Committee meeting will include an audit of the books and a review of allocations between Vanguard funds.

IT Committee (Stephanie Thorp): The System Administrator performed a full backup on 6 January. The desktop computer equipment appears to be in good functioning order and the networked operation of the to be in similarly good condition, with no problems with the printer connection to the computers. Backup of Past Perfect files was done and removed offsite for safekeeping.

Marketing (Sally Halsey): Press releases for the January program have been sent, and e-calendars have been updated. We are working with the GeoHistory committee to plan a marketing strategy for an unveiling of the project.

Program & Membership (Aimeé Allaire): P&M had a quiet few months. The November program, Nautical Folk Art, had to be canceled due to the speaker falling ill; we are hoping to reschedule Norman Brouwer for this fall. Kate Dimanescu will speak on the Appelman & Williams families on January 23rd. Membership renewals will be sent out this month.

Special Events (Sally Halsey): Historic Plaque Report: Letters were sent in December to the property owners of the 14 identified properties regarding the plaques. We will follow up in January 2013 with phone calls and meetings to discuss them. We have chosen the Mystic River Foundry to create the plaques. The owner is excited to be part of the project. The next step is to secure funding for the plaques. If anyone is interested in working on a grant application, please contact Sally.

Special Project - GeoHistorian Project: (Cathy Marco): On November 29th, teachers, parents and students from Mystic Middle School and Stonington High School were bused downtown to visit, learn about & photograph their assigned buildings. MRHS Volunteers helped serve as guides and share their knowledge of the locations. Many of the building owners or tenants personally welcomed the GeoHistorians. Students also learned how historical information is archived onsite at the Downes Building and the Mystic & Noank Library with Dorrie Hanna and Lou Allyn respectively as guides. On December 5, a group of MRHS volunteers went to Mystic Middle School to share more information and interesting topics including Lou’s discussion about the ledges and geography of Mystic, Catherine Deichmann’s discussion about the two towns before the first bridge across the Mystic River, and Bill Peterson’s discussion about the boys and men of Mystic in the Civil War. Volunteers will visit the students on Monday, January 28 to critique final scripts.

Jennifer Pryor has continued to work with homeschoolers with their assigned buildings - touring sites and expanding research online and through interviews as needed.

New Business: Project forms (Stephanie Thorp): Stephanie handed out copies of a project justification worksheet with instructions and explained that use of the form would improve our project planning and decision making.

~ No unfinished business. ~

The next meetings is February 11th, 2013 at 7pm.
February Board Reports

Because of very poor road and weather conditions following snow storm Nemo the February meeting of the Board of Trustees was cancelled. Reports were submitted by email.

President’s Report (Lou Allyn): An update to the Special Project Proposal form will be issued shortly. 2012 Annual Reports are being consolidated. Pat Schaefer has completed the first draft of a history “Mystic River Historical Society - The First 40 Years.”

Corresponding (Lois Glazer):  One thank you letter was written since the last meeting.

Treasurer’s Report (Barry Thorp): No report - vacationing.

STANDING COMMITTEES
Buildings & Grounds (Alan Greener): Work is progressing on options for the Academy gutter repair project.

Curatorial (Lou Allyn & Dorrie Hanna): The Mystic Flag Committee has donated some materials to the MRHS: two bronze plaques from earlier flag poles (1962 and 1986), a wooden halyard cleat, and a gilded wood carving of a Liberty Cap that was formerly at the top of the flag pole. The Collections Manager and a group of volunteers (Sally Halsey, Lou & Cindy Allyn, Catherine Deichman, Betty O’Donnell & Bill Peterson) have been assisting Cathy Marco with the GeoHistorian Project. Previous research by Joanna Case, Judy Hicks and Betty Ann Tylaska was the basis of resource booklets given to the students. As the project progresses, Dorrie has been doing additional research and locating additional pictures, as well as answering students’ questions and reviewing the students’ narratives for accuracy.

Education/Outreach (Cathy Mauritz): Our third grade teacher, Tim Evers (aka "Mr. Avery"), has decided to retire. We all want to sincerely thank Tim for his many years as schoolmaster of Portersville Academy and wish him well. Tim mentioned he would be willing to help out any new volunteer to learn how he taught his lessons from the 1840’s. If you or someone you know may be interested in the job, please let Cathy know. • Kay Janney has volunteered to continue offering our spring program as our first grade teacher, "Miss Palmer" this year. Volunteers are needed to assist Kay and the "downstairs" part of the program from 9 to 11:30 am on several weekdays in May or early June. Please contact Cathy Mauritz, 860-333-4876, cemauritz@yahoo.com

Finance (David Evans): There has been no meeting of the Committee in the past month. An ongoing review of our investment strategy is being conducted via email. Barring further scheduling issues, the Committee will meet prior to the March Board Meeting to conduct the internal audit and decide on any portfolio changes.

IT Committee (Stephanie Thorp): A full back-up was performed on 25 January. Desktop computer equipment appears to be functioning and in good condition. Networked operation of the desktop computers is also functioning well. Backup for Past Perfect database files was done and removed off site for safekeeping.

Marketing (Sally Halsey): Press Releases have gone out for the February program.

Program & Membership (Aimée Allaire): Kate Dimanescu’s talk on her genealogy research path and Mystic’s Appelman and Williams families was very well-received. About 50 people were in attendance and $31 was collected in donations. Kate gave a thorough list of online genealogy resources which was then sent to the whole membership and put on the MRHS website. We hope it will be a good start for those looking to research their own families. February’s upcoming program is by Carolyn Wakeman entitled Linking History and Art at the Florence Griswold Museum. Carolyn is the author of The Charm of the Place: Old Lyme in the 1920s, published in 2011 by the Old Lyme Historical Society.

Special Events (Sally Halsey): Plaques on Downtown Buildings - We will be contacting all property owners in February, getting their permission on the plaque design. We’ll then contact authorities in Stonington and Groton. We hope to have the plaques in place in September.

Special Project - GeoHistorian Project: (Cathy Marco): Mystic Middle and Stonington High School students presented their building/site work for critique & constructive suggestion to a number of Mystic Historical Society members. Preparations are being made for the launch of the Geohistorian Project at 11am, May 4 at the Mystic River Park. Notification has been given to tv and news media as well as personal meetings with Ed Haberek and Mark Oefinger. A banner is being designed and is permitted to be displayed on the Central Hall green wall or chain fence. The brochures are still to be done. A plaque QR code character has been voted on by the GeoHistorians. Many thanks to all the MRHS members who have been helping with this project! We have been offered some modest funds by Ed Haberek, and an application is being made to the Rotary Club of Mystic for a grant to cover some of the outstanding expenses for the project. If anyone else has any other suggestions, please let me know.

New Business: Plans are underway for a 40th Anniversary celebration in September. Please contact Sally Halsey if you would like to help celebrate!

~ No unfinished business. ~

The next meetings is March 18th, 2013 at 7pm at the Mystic and Noank Library.
Dear MRHS Members,

Thank you all for your continued renewals that keep coming in. And thank you to all who have contributed to our 40th anniversary appeal. If you haven’t already renewed your membership, please do so -- it helps our Mystic River Historical Society thrive - which we feel is very important.

Cindy Allyn, Membership Coordinator