

Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT DON RALSTON

Dear Members;

I sincerely hope all of our members had a Merry Christmas and will enjoy a happy, prosperous and healthy 2006.

I hope that in the year 2006 we will find peace for the whole world, and that we will not again be tortured by natural catastrophes, as was so often the case during last year.

Looking back over 2005, we find that our organization accomplished several things. All files and artifacts were moved from the library to the Community Center. A computer system has been set up to start creating a permanent record. Our membership list has been updated. New members have been added; more merchandise was obtained and sold.

On the 4th of July an open house was held to display artifacts from the Wenonah Military Academy. This was well received by visitors and members alike. The monthly meetings were well attended.

During 2006 we look forward to the commencement of work on restoration of the Community Center. Mayor Tom Capaldi appeared at our March 2005 meeting and described the progress that is being made along this line.

In addition to this newsletter we contribute to the Wenonah Town Watch newsletter. You can track other items of community interest between our newsletter and the Town Watch letter.

Wenonah is noted for Volunteerism, and it is amply shown in the Wenonah Historical Society. Our officers and members have shown this trait in our various committee assignments. Jack Sheppard is head of cataloguing and filing and of the Building Committee.

Carol Wiltsee, Treasurer for many years keeps track of our finances. Membership chairperson Jean Cowles has updated the membership list and added new members. Betty MacLeod handles merchandise ordering and sales. Acting secretary Jo Dominy, has done a great job filling in for Eileen Caraker whose son Bradley has some medical problems. Rachel Knisell, historian who's many diaries compiled over the years have recorded the growth and history of our town for all to see.

WHS OFFICERS 2006

President	Don Ralston
Vice Pres.	Jack Sheppard Sr.
Secretary	Jo Dominy
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Corr. Sec.	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Vicki McCall
Trustee	Lucy Schulz

Meetings second Friday of the month at the Community Center except June, July and August

The historical house plaques program started originally by Jean and Jack Ehlers is now overseen by Frank Eggert, Don Davis and Chick Cowles.

Each committee has been helped by other member volunteers.

Vicki and Lou McCall opened their home to us for our September meeting as they have for several years. It was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

Pat Sole organized our annual Christmas Party and she and her committee did a spectacular job! Besides decorating the Community Center and having the dinner catered an exchange of gifts took place.

The speaker for the January meeting will be Victor Anderson. He will tell us of his many years of auctioneering and handling the sale of estates, from attics to basements

During 2005 there were several things we planned to do but did not complete. We will do our best to accomplish the following tasks during the coming year.

1. Complete the filing and cataloguing of our artifacts
2. Purchase a Historical Society banner for the Wenonah Ball Park.
3. Update our by-laws to build in their protection for the future.
4. Prepare a budget and audit process.

We entertain any and all suggestions from the membership to help make the organization prosper and grow and continue to be a force and voice in the Wenonah cultural activities.

Sincerely yours; Don Ralston

HISTORICAL TIDBIT

From the Minute books of Wenonah Borough Council.

April 12, 1912 Jesse English was placed in charge of the Borough's water plant at a salary of \$120.00 per year.

At the June 6, 1912 meeting a

Resolution was introduced on first reading proclaiming; "That bathing or swimming in the upper lake, known as Warner's Pond in a nude state is prohibited. Those desiring to avail themselves of the bathing privilege must be provided with suitable clothing and avoid all indecent or unseemly exposure."

Jack Sheppard Sr.

The following story and photos are from the newsletter of the Hereford inlet Lighthouse Museum at the northern end of Wildwood. Our Rachel Knisell was interviewed during the early part of last year by Betty Mugnier, lighthouse Manager. Rachel has been designated Wenonah's Historian and it is a title she has earned and deserves. She provided me with a wonderful historical recollection concerning the battleship Maine that was sunk in Havana Harbor. The story is too long to relate here but I strongly recommend we ask Rachel to be the speaker at a future meeting. She has volumes of information and recollections about history in general and Wenonah in particular.

Several years ago a busload of senior citizens came to tour the Lighthouse as many do during the "shoulder" seasons. One of the women from the bus asked if anyone would be interested in seeing some scrap books that she brought with her. "Yes I would love to see them" I said without hesitation. We have learned from experience that you never know when a new piece of information about our history is going to turn up. In this case, it turned out to be a real treasure trove and the beginning of a great friendship. I called Steve Murray right away knowing that he would be very interested in the books Rachel had brought with her. While the others from the bus took the tour Rachel sat and talked to us as we browsed through her albums. When she saw our interest in these treasures she made an arrangement with the bus driver to continue the bus tour without her and come back later in the afternoon to pick her up for the trip home. She had decided at this time to leave the material with us to be returned to her at a later date.

Rachel Burke Knisell is a sweet soft-spoken woman with an incredible knowledge of history. She shared with us this day just several scrapbooks and photo albums from her collection of 130. She began putting these together over 60 years ago. There are rare magazine articles, maps, almanacs, photos, diary entry's, newspaper clippings and much more. Most of this is maritime history. Much of it is her own family's history.

Her family tree has so many branches of early and important Cape May County Families, it is truly amazing. The surnames read like a "who's who" of the county's history. Burke, Corson. Cresse. Smith. Stiles, Hickman, Ross, Young. Whilden, Somers, Godfrey, and on and on.

Rachel's interest in history began at age nine during trips to her grandmother's home in Woodbury. Adult conversations always turned to some fascinating story of her family's history. This captivated the young girl.

Rachel told me that she was born in Wildwood on Glenwood Ave. 77 years ago. Her mother Emily, a teacher at Glenwood School, first caught a glimpse of her future husband at a fire at the Marine Bank. Emily was among the crowd watching the Wildwood Fire Company battle a blaze at the bank on Pacific Ave. She saw a brave and handsome fireman on the roof surrounded in smoke and wondered how he could survive this. She was very relieved when later, she saw him on the ground and they struck up a conversation. The fireman was Horace Burke. He and Emily eventually married.

Rachel's ancestry goes way back - probably to the Mayflower. The earliest known relative she has been able to trace is Anthony Ludlam, born in Long Island in the 1670's.

Of particular importance to Hereford are some names that have played important roles in our history. Her great, great, grandfather was John S. Ludlam. He was the commissioner of wrecks or "Wreck Master" from the "Dry Inlet on Learnings Beach to Turtle Gut Inlet." His job was to find and secure wrecks and cargo and place notice of this until the legal owners were found. He was also in charge of the first Life Saving Station in Anglesea from 1849 - 1863. This was long before Hereford Lighthouse was constructed.

In 1857 he was awarded a silver medal for his courage in saving the crew of the Schooner "Race Rock", lost on Hereford Bar on Christmas day 1856.

Rachel's grandmother's half brother was Henry S. Ludlam, Keeper of the Anglesea Life Saving Station from 1902 - 1914. His numerous well-known rescues included the wreck of the Schooner Fannie Bailey in 1882 and the party boat Nora in 1906.

Another relative of Rachel's was the famous Christopher Ludlam, Keeper of the Anglesea Station from 1883 - 1897. Christopher was considered a national hero and received a gold medal for his December rescue of the crew of the Schooner D. H. Ingraham in 1886. He is responsible for saving 232 lives and \$641,000 in property (1890's dollars) during his career.

Not all of Rachel's famous relatives lived in the 19th Century. One of her father's brothers was Raymond Burke, founder of Burke Motors. Another uncle was Richard L. Burke, President of Sun Ship Yard in Chester, Penna.

Rachel's collection of historical information includes the whalers, pirates, Life Saving Service, Lighthouses, sunken treasure and much more. She is a very talented woman that admires the self-sufficiency of our ancestors. She said she always wanted to learn to do everything herself. She still does her own carpentry work!

Rachel's husband, Ralph Knisell, is a well-known outdoor sports writer and radio personality in the Cumberland County area. They have two sons, Harry Wilson Knisell and Richard Ludlam Knisell.

It is a pleasure to spend time with Rachel who comes down several times a year to visit. She always brings more gems for us to display or put in our archives. She is also a "Friend" and we are much appreciative of her sharing her wealth of knowledge and family history with us.

Betty Mugnier
Manager Hereford Lighthouse



Rachel Burke Knisell with photo of her great great grandfather John S. Ludlum



Henry S. Ludlum

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PO Box 32
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

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WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2006

Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER MAILED TO YOUR HOME
- MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH INFORMATIVE PROGRAMS
- ACCESS TO HISTORICAL ARCHIVES AND MEMORABILIA
- NETWORK OF KNOWLEDGEABLE HISTORIANS
- HISTORICAL FIELD TRIPS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

AMOUNT PAID \$ _____

CHECK _____ CASH _____

BRING FORM AND PAYMENT TO MEETING, OR MAIL. THANK YOU

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

WHS PO Box 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090
