

Next Meeting – January 8, 2018: Jennifer Hunter, and the contractors hired by the *York River Study* to conduct historic resource surveys in the upper part of the watershed earlier this year, will present their findings at our meeting. The meeting will be held at the John F. Hill Grange Hall and will begin at 7pm with Ms. Hunter's presentation. Refreshments will be served.

ANNUAL MEETING ELECTIONS

All current officers were unanimously re-elected. Kathy Runey was elected to serve on the Board of Directors.

Meeting Notes:

At our **November meeting** Walter, Barbara and Ed Hanson who are reenactors shared with us their collection of Vietnam. They appeared in their respective uniforms - Barbara in her Red Cross, Ed in his MP camouflage and Walter in his "olive greens"





Walter represented a MEDCAP (Medical Civic Action Program) which was run by the US Army Medical Corps in an effort to win the hearts and minds of the people. He explained that these facilities included medics (Navy), Corpsman (Army), and a few doctors to treat the village peoples. There were also dentists, veterinarians as well as combat engineers. Many of the supplies that were used came from those left over during World War II

and the Korean War. Included were IV bottles, catgut sutures (still in the alcohol), liquid used to re-constitute plasma, various medicine, a fetal stethoscope, light stand, along with various booklets and a medical cot and many other items.

Barbara talked about the Red Cross workers that served on bases as well as in the field with the soldiers. They got no special treatment. They provided entertainment for the troops including putting on shows, restful games such as cards and familiar foods as well as helping soldiers write letters to those at home. They were first sent in in February of 1962 and the last left Vietnam in 1973. There were 1100 woman who served with the Red Cross in Vietnam. They shared the military hardships and the conditions in the field and war zones. Of these only 5 were killed in the field, the last being killed during the baby lift. There were 20 military hospitals/installations and 2 hospital ships that they served as well located in other areas including Korea, Hawaii, and Japan.



Ed explained that as a military officer (MP) he had two full time jobs - as a policeman and as an infantryman. He would serve as part of security on the bases, going out on patrol, making sure everyone was obeying the military code of justice (making sure law and order was kept) as well as going out in the field and therefore also carried a rifle, hand grenades and the necessary provisions. As he talked Ed showed us much of the gear that he had brought which an MP would carry. These items included a law enforcement belt which held a nightstick, revolver, spare magazine and handcuffs. In jungle he would have one or 2 bandoliers for ammunition, fighting knife, entrenching tool, parachute flair and bayonet. An M-16, M-14 or shotgun was carried out into the field as well as canteens, a jungle first aid kit which included salt packets to help rehydrate, hand grenades, one day's worth of rations (an MCI), and a small pack of cigarettes. Smoking he said was the norm. Most soldiers smoked. The cigarettes were given to them as a way to help reduce stress. Also included in the gear was a gas mask, helmet, and flak jacket in case of a mortar attack to protect the chest from flying fragments. Gear weighed between 40 and 60 pounds and with the backpack there could be over 90 pounds of gear carried.



At our **December** meeting our **RAFFLE DRAWING** was held. The focal piece was a hand hooked wool rug made and donated by Kathryn Spellacy, which was won by Mary Triggs of York.

The other items were made and donated by artist Jane Kennedy – beautifully framed paintings featuring her scenes of Eliot and the area, during the time she lived here. These were won by Sophia Dennie.



Area News and Events

Study on York River released:

A newly released report from The Nature Conservancy, *Resilient Coastal Sites for Conservation in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic US*, found York River salt marshes and tidal habitats to be in the top 1% of over 1,500 northeastern coastal sites surveyed for resiliency - that is, most likely to support biological diversity and ecological functions under different scenarios of sea level rise.

FMI: <http://conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/UnitedStates/edc/reportsdata/climate/CoastalResilience/Pages/default.aspx>

OBHS – The History Games:

What an exciting evening Bob and I had at the recent *History Games* fundraiser held by the Old Berwick Historical Society. We met up with Bobbi and Floyd (who was to be a “character” for the evening), lots of new people and had a great time. Bob and I joined a team and set out to discover the answers to some questions around South Berwick’s history. Our correct answers would then lead us to a “password” that we would use at the end of evening to re-enter the Wadleigh Ballroom which had been transformed into a “Speakeasy”. For this night we became time travelers, going back to the 1800s, all the way up to the 1970s, as we traversed venues located in the upper town square. Characters met us on the street, talking with us and relaying their stories - Madame Cushing and Marquis de Lafayette, who met us outside the site of her former home (now Central School); citizens having just finished fighting the great fire of 1870



questioned as to what we were doing out and were skeptical of what we’d been up to and we met up with some nuns outside the old St. Joseph’s Academy - wielding their rulers! They talked with us about their time as teachers and what those days were like.

A sea captain and members of his crew told us about shipbuilding in South Berwick and some ship disasters.



We also ventured inside Central School, the gym being transformed into “Teen Haven” where we participated in the *stroll* and *twist* and former dancers shared with us their experiences attending the dances in the 1950s.

At the Wadleigh Ballroom we relived the days of the Newichawannock Hall which was built following the 1870 fire. It was a multipurpose hall and hosted movies, roller skating, boxing, and dancing. There the cowardly lion, Dracula, a cowboy (Floyd), May West and Scarlet O’Hara entertained

us. At the Sarah Orne Jewett house “Sarah” with the help of her Irish maid, and members of our group read her story *Elleneen*. Even Bob was drawn into the “play” as Danny, Elleneen’s long lost love.

We entered a one room schoolhouse and as students did our reciting, sums, and housekeeping duties. The rowdier of our groups got the



designation of “dunce” and a seat in the corner!





At the old Frost Tavern/Paul Hotel, we became part of the trial of Edwin Knight in the murder of Fanny Sprague - the men on the jury and the women in the audience. It was a lively trial with a "campaigning" Edwin Knight, a shifty lawyer, no nonsense reporter and the comic ghost of Fanny Sprague literally "flitting in and out" at strategic moments of the testimony, lamenting what had befallen her, urging the jury to see the truth of things and to avenge her death. To our horror Edwin Knight was acquitted!

Our clues gathered, we headed back to the Ballroom which had been transformed into a Speakeasy with feathers, beads, lights and glistening bottles decorating the tables. Before going in we had to figure out the password by



placing our clues into a crossword containing circled letters that spelled out the password. Every team was successful and we then gathered for an evening of music and food (provided by Spring Hill), an open bar, a small auction and dancing. It was a wonderful fundraiser and evening for all!

