

ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY – Minutes of the Meeting – January 7th, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm. The business part of the meeting followed the evening's program at 8:15pm, but is summarized first in these minutes.

Paul Johnson shared to all of the Fudge Raffle tonight. With 3 prizes and tickets @ \$1 / each. All were invited to put their name and money in the basket and the winners will be drawn at the end of the evening. Doris Grover was the donor of the fudge.

Paul Johnson informed the attendees of Jeanette Paul's passing on December 23, 2018. Jeanette was a known historian, poet and author and an outstanding person. A moment of silence was shared for Jeanette and it was announced that the January meeting is dedicated in her honor. It was confirmed that Jeanette would be turning 96 at her next birthday.

Secretary's Report - It was communicated that at this time we do not have a secretary elected, however, Tracey Graffam has volunteered to fill in. The minutes of the November meeting were read and accepted with one correction.

Treasurer's Report – Pam Ashley read the December financial report and it was approved. As of Dec. 30th, the Building fund was \$40,365.20 and the checking account balance is \$14,630.62. Income during the period came from bank interest, memberships, fudge raffle, book sales, chalkboard sales, donations and raffle schoolhouse sales, totaling \$597.70. Expenses were for Rent & Storage at \$150. It was noted that the CMP bill came in after month-end. The report was accepted with no corrections.

Correspondence – Helen Sullivan reported that she sent out a card to Carol Zamarchi who had surgery last Friday but is now home and will not need to go to rehab. Doris Grover, who provided the fudge for the raffle turns 92 this month and it's recommended that a birthday card be signed by all and sent to her.

Membership – Sylvia Moynahan has updated the membership list with the additional two members who have joined. It was also confirmed that a Christmas card and donation of \$50 had been received from Max Damian, the grandson of Ruth Moulton. A reminder was noted regarding the annual dues cost of \$10/year, life memberships at \$50 and \$70 for families.

Program – Carolyn Bogh shared updates for the upcoming programs and confirmed that Sylvia Moynahan provided a recommendation for the program for the month of February be dedicated to the memory of Jeanette. Due to the timing and interest to include Jeanette's family, that March would be better. The members were asked to assist in documenting memories to share. It was also noted that in the Obituary, the request was made for donations to be sent to the Eliot Historical Society. Helen agreed she would invite Jeanette's family. It was discussed that there is both an audio and video tape of an interview with Jeanette. It was also asked if the society wanted to make a plaque in her memory for the School House, with a picture and inscription. All thought this was a good idea as the school very important to her. Recommended having the plaque in place for the opening of the school house in April. Pam asked about a donation on her behalf to the school. Pam agreed to look into getting the plaque and find a good picture of her to be hung in the School House. It was recommended also that with the Opening of School House in April and extend opening to her family as well as all others invited.

Carolyn provided additional updates on program topics and shared that she had invited an author who wrote "Colored Man in Exeter" for the February Program as it was Black History Month. The author required a contract and \$100. Carolyn felt that was too costly considering there was only \$104 collected in total. She confirmed she is looking for other program ideas. It was recommended that local people from the community be invited to speak. Perhaps Arthur Colson who had been the first President of the Historical Society. Sarah Farmer was also identified as possible speaker from South Berwick.

A question was posed as to the amount allowed for special speakers and what the process is for getting approval to bring them in? Is this something the membership should approve? It was confirmed that \$200 has been allocated each year and is still available. It was confirmed that the program chair can make that decision without the approval of the membership and there is money available to feel okay to use it. There was also a question on the limitation on attendees and confirmed that the Fire Chief should be asked. Paul Johnson agreed to look into. It was confirmed that for February, Paul Johnson will be giving a presentation on Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

Collections – No news to report

Building - No news to report

PR/Publicity - No news to report

Fund Raising - No news to report

Education - Jan Cerabona shared that we did not receive the grant that was applied for. She is working with the 2nd graders for a new project. Due to snow last week their meeting was canceled and is rescheduled for the following Thursday. There is a new member, Barbara Cummins who will be assisting in opening up the school house.

It was discussed that 2020 is the Anniversary for State of Maine. The state is looking for towns to be involved. It was discussed that we look at the one-room school houses throughout the area and could offer tours. Other ideas for 2020 Anniversary celebration requested.

Grants – no further news other than the grant applied for was not approved

Old business

Debbie Scribner confirmed that the Eliot Town Flags that were ordered have been delivered before Christmas. Received a very positive response including a "Thank-you" letter. One gentleman asked about flag repair so Debbie is assisting in this. It was a flag given him from President Bush. Three (3) additional flags sold to the Town of Eliot. Received \$150. It was noted that Debbie spearheaded this effort and the Eliot Historical Society was benefited by her hard work. If there is enough interest, may consider this again in the future. It was noted that the artist who designed the Town Flag originally came from Holland and was a concentration camp survivor. Jules Meyer is his name – he is currently very ill. It would be nice to honor his efforts with his family and present the flag to him. Keith agreed to go and visit Jules Meyer. All approved to authorize Keith and Rosanne to meet with him and present him the flag. There are two flags remaining if anyone is interested.

It was noted that Jim Staples has received a life membership.

It was asked of the status of the project for the SW for the Cemetery. Paul Johnson confirmed that he presented to the town the idea, the Town requires three bids. Paul will follow up with revised numbers and submitted as budget item. He will be attending the Budget Meeting on Jan. 17th. All are invited to attend.

New Business

Paul Johnson confirmed he will send out the updated refreshment schedule to all via email. Every month is filled except for November. All reminded that only responsible for baked goods and drink, all paper goods are provided for.

It was shared that Fran Hartford who had suffered a stroke 4 years ago, he has been recently able to walk up and down stairs at this home. Very good news.

The Fudge Drawing was held. Paul Johnson closed the meeting at 9pm. There were 36 in attendance.

Program

Carolyn Bogh announced speaker- Len Bogh. Len Bogh shared his experience teaching on the island of Chebeague. Len taught during two years in 1998-99. The school was a 2-room school house. He shared some information about the island which is the largest island in size, while Peak's Island is largest in population. It's the largest island - Elementary school in the State of Maine. At that time, there were 320 people living year-round. There were 26 kids in school from K-6 with 2 teachers and 1 assistant. Len taught grades 3-6 and had 13 students. There were some challenges such as teaching four grades in one classroom. But with the challenge there was a lot of fun. Maine has a total of 15 year-round Island- communities which are sustained with year-round populations. It's the schools that keep them going. The families need the schools. The demographics were very different 200-400 years ago. The islands were the earliest places that were settled. Island life was vibrant. The first people were fishing or doing other seafaring work. Island living was also the safest from Indian attacks. Islands really thrived through the 1800s. Currently, no island has more than 1 school. There are three islands that have K-12 schools: Islesboro, Northhaven and Vinalhaven. There are a total of 15 schools that still exist with half of those in Casco Bay and the other half in Penobscot Bay. Monhegan is the furthest east island where 7 children attend schools.

Len shared that during his time he commuted via boat to the island each day. He enjoyed the commute. The Island People place a huge value on the school which is the lifeblood of the population and the community. There is an organization focused on island living whose mission it is to support the ongoing success of Maine Islands which focusing on the school systems. The organization provides resources & advice.

On the island, everyone is on a first name basis, with everyone knowing everyone, including everyone's business. With that there are pros & cons. In Len's experience, no teachers live on the island, but rather commuted, providing for some separation from the work day and home life. The dynamics on island would make it difficult to live there. There is no such thing as a child with no friends – as there are not enough numbers. During recess, all the children in class played together.

With lesson planning, one needed to plan for kids: 3rd graders with reading and spellings, through 6th grade – with high school level math and science. The range of content is extremely broad. Even still, the dynamics were very good and the kids got along and cooperated. Len confirmed that he did later move to the island of Chebeague and lived as a carpenter. Although one was much supported, one needs to be a hearty person to live on the island. With purchasing groceries on the mainland and transporting them home via boat, it's a lot of work. People are very individualistic but also help each other out.

Len had seven kids in 3rd grade, this was considered a population boom for this age group. The boys were a very tight-knit group, they did everything together. The culture was very permissive, where the kids have a lot of freedom. There was no fear of strangers as there were natural perimeters so the kids had a lot of liberty.

The island is three miles long and one mile wide. It is the largest island in Casco Bay, which makes for a large playground for the kids. The school is an extension of community. The community invests \$\$ into school, though they don't receive much state funding due to small population.

A friend on the island, who was a dad of a student, took him on as an apprentice. The following year, he moved on island and started his career as a carpenter. He found it very interesting to get a first-hand perspective on the days and evenings living on the island. As teacher you headed home each day. Whereas living there, it was very interesting and he gained a deeper understanding of the day to day logistics, like getting supplies from mainland and how much you draw one-another.

As a final overview of his year teaching, it was an absolutely great experience. It was great way to start out one's teaching career. The islands have a hard time finding teachers due to the need to commute via boat to teach and not arriving home until 5:30pm.

Len entertained a number of questions at the end of his discussion.

What was your technique teaching 3rd to 6th grade? How handle the various ages in classroom: All about planning with selecting a subject and adapting it to each of the age levels and abilities. Such as the unit on the Solar system, where assignments were matched with the students' intellectual abilities. Science was easier to do this while English, Spelling and Math were individualized with various assignments by grade. Having a teacher assistant helped. A wife of one of the lobsterman (who made up over 50% of population) was the teacher's assistant, working with the student throughout the day. This worked out quite well.

When Len taught, the island population was 320, the population is currently increasing. Though one hundred years ago, there were far more residents, perhaps double in 1800.

The population sustained themselves with work on the mainland, though many worked as lobster men and women. There were five carpenters, all of whom were sole proprietors. Although they all were at most, a 2-man crew, they were all very collaborative. Everyone got together for coffee in the morning at the store. On the island, there is an inn, small store and a plumbing company. There were a handful of retirees who were once summer residents. There are about 3000 summer residents. Many commute via the Casco Bay Ferry Lines which serve the 8 islands. Chebeague has its own ferry line. It's about 20 min. on the local ferry and about 1hr commute using the Casco Bay line. Peaks Island has the most connections with a few thousand who live there year-round. Len knew of one island, a father of one of his students who was blind. He took the ferry each day to work and commuted to Portland.

Are there cell towers, cell phones? There are currently cell towers etc.. there now. Back then there were no cell phones. Today, the lifestyle is the same not much different from living on the mainland. Just quirky island living.

Question: Was there medical services, nurses or doctors? Yes, there were. There was a public safety building, but no police department. The school is part of Cumberland schools, where the kids go to Greely HS. It was about 10 years ago the island succeeded from the town of Cumberland. The Fire department on the island were all volunteer with a fire truck. No police department or police cruiser. The town council runs things for the island. Any medical help needed to go to the mainland and there is a Helipad if airlifting is needed. It was not uncommon for midwife who supporting the birth of kids on island.

How did the island students measure up to mainland students? The Island populations have a high HS grad rate as a whole. Most kids went on to college. Most kids take on the family business – such as being a lobsterman. It provides a good living. Many students / kids come back and settle back in the island. It's common to find 6-7 generations living on the island. Some of the oldest family names Doughertys who reside up and down the coast throughout the islands. Several family lines like that.

What is the main power source? Likely via underground cables – CMP. No direct power plant.

Of the 15 islands in Maine who have schools - all have a ferry service and are year-round islands.

Is there transportation on the island? Yes, there is a bus on the island. There was also a taxi who picked up the teachers each morning from the ferry. Most islanders have two vehicles – one the island and one the mainland.

Residents had a parking lot for them on the mainland. There was two parking lots. The teachers parked here. Parking was based on seniority. There was another location located on route 1 where non-residents parked and which was supported by a shuttle/bus service connected parking.

The island living and logistics are interesting, when you buy a gallon of ice cream you needed to plan accordingly.

Was there a special unit that was taught and tailored for kids because they lived one an island? There was not much you could teach the kids that they didn't already know about the island. They know everything about a tide pool. It was the kids that taught him. Len went out with one of the dads who was a lobsterman. He learned about egg-bearing females, cutting notches etc... Being out for about 14 hours, he learned a lot. The families are all so interconnected – they know the history of the island generations back. The families are all quite close and connected.

Did you take kids to mainland for trips? Yes, though the dynamics can be tough due to the different grades and it takes a lot of time to get kids off island.

The discussion wrapped up at 7:50pm and the attendees took a break for refreshment. Many thanks to Julie Johnson for tonight's refreshments.