



Newsletter of the Old Village Association of Chatham, Massachusetts

Volume VIII

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Summer, 2008

## Town Meeting Scorecard:

### Affordable Housing and the Display ByLaw

Following up on our earlier article, the voters spoke at last month's Town Meeting, and in a series of narrow decisions (1) rejected a passel of Affordable Housing ByLaw amendments by 8 votes shy of the required 2/3 margin, and (2) approved the change to the Display By Law – also by about 8 votes – which will now allow limited displays on the applicant's property beyond the first 5 feet if the building is set back 10 feet or more from the street. Both decisions came at the tail end of the meeting at which time many of the audience had drifted away. Whether these results would have been changed if the Articles were brought up earlier is hard to say, since the package of Affordable Housing amendments was extremely difficult to decipher in any event.

The Selectmen have urged the Planning Board to go back and “unbundle” at least some of the Affordable Housing amendments so that they can be voted on separately. They also want the Board to take another hard look at the entire affordable housing issue to see if they can come up with something that would work to produce more “de facto” affordable housing/workforce housing for Chatham, whether or not it will “count” as part of our certified State inventory and thereby get us to a point where we will reach our 10% minimum and no longer have to cope with “unfriendly” 40B projects. The Planning Board has made it clear that they are not going to be rushed into this again, and so our guess is that they do not intend to serve up something for a fall town meeting which would only be about four or five months away.

Re the Display ByLaw amendment, you will very soon be able to judge for yourself whether the relaxation in restrictions will mark a change in the way our downtown looks – the crowds are already here!

*Norm Pacun*

## Old Village Association Summer Programs

The Old Village Association has planned two programs for this summer. The first, a neighborhood get-together, will be on Wednesday July 23 at 3:30 at the home of Naomi Turner and David Veach (102 Main Street). The Association Board extends a warm invitation to all members and especially encourages Old Village newcomers to drop by to meet other neighbors, learn a bit about the Association and join in a free-wheeling discussion of any and all topics of interest. Since 1997, the Association has held these informal “Iced Tea and Cool Conversation” programs in private homes. They are great fun and have been very helpful to the Board as it plans how best to serve its members. To reserve a place, please call Debbie at 945-8969 or Carol at 945-1627.

The Association Annual Meeting will be held this year on August 24th at 7:00 pm (6:30 coffee and dessert) at the Chatham Beach and Tennis Club. Mike Pease will speak about the Pease Boat Works and Marine Railway on Eliphamets Lane as well as the long tradition of building and restoring wooden boats.

## Andrew Hardings Lane Beach Update

In mid-May, AHL Beach was the happy recipient of 6,000 yards of fresh sand dredged from the channel near the fish pier and pumped through a pipe to the Old Village public beach. Ted Keon, Director of Coastal Resources, was instrumental, once again, in putting together a town program which combined the fishing fleet's need for dredging with the use of the spoils for necessary beach nourishment. In addition, Ted was able to fund a portion of the overall cost through FEMA as part of its reimbursement for recent storm-related damage. The Old Village Association is grateful to Ted for making sure that the beach continues to be a public recreational spot for all of Chatham's residents and visitors.

The next time this takes place (hopefully, next year), try to get down to the beach to watch the gulls lining up around the pipe for their next meal – crabs, clams or whatever goodies that have been sucked up and sent along as the water rushes from the fish pier onto the shore. Quite a spectacle!

## EDITORIAL

### Sumer is icumen in; Lhude sing cuccu!

Those of us who live here year around welcome the infusion of enthusiasm that Old Village summer residents bring to our community. The signal is loud and clear – the moment has come for the rest of us to close our files, put aside the issues that have consumed us all winter, and simply relax. Iced tea, porch furniture, trashy novels, tennis courts, sand and water await us (along with relatives and house guests). Certainly, this is not the time to deal with serious matters. At least we hope so.

“Hope” here is the key word. In summers past, the Long Range Plan, Main St. reconstruction, a zoning bylaw rewrite, and the efforts to purchase AHL beach took center stage. Many of you who were here for a few weeks of vacation attended meetings, wrote letters and had a positive effect on the determinations. The Town and the Old Village were the better for your willingness, in the heat of the day, to join the heat of the battle.

The Board of the Association does not (crossed fingers) see any major issues looming in the next few months. But, still, we would appreciate a few minutes of your time so we can meet with you to discuss any concerns or opinions you have about the present, past, or future of the Old Village. All of us hope to see you at one of our meetings and are always happy to “shoot the breeze over the back fence.” Talking, after all, is what a true neighborhood is all about. Thank you, and enjoy!

### Questions for the Fall and Winter

(in case you want to worry now):

- Will the revised zoning bylaw rewrite, be comprehensible? (a goal not yet achieved) Will it create a balance which will preserve Chatham’s character as well as provide affordable and workforce living space?
- Will wastewater decisions result in sewerage all or most of the town? If so, what economic effect will this have, not only on the tax base, but, more importantly, on individual homeowners who are forced to connect? What costs will owners incur when the pipe is laid from the street to their houses? Will there be additional costs for interior work for some homeowners? These questions have yet to be explored.
- What effect will the changing coastline have on Old Village properties and land?
- And will the present rage for mega-mansions wane – granting the overworked boards and commissions (and weary abutters) a bit of breathing space along with sunlight, green grass, and a view?

*Carol Pacun, editor*



### From the President Oral History Project: Needed – a Few Good Men (and Women)

The Oral History Committee members have already interviewed 24 folks for the Old Village Oral History Project. Once each interview is complete and on tape, the committee has it transcribed to a CD and hard copy. The originals will be housed in the Atwood House’s new archival storage area. This is an important effort: these histories will give a first-hand picture of life in the Old Village for future generations to enjoy.

During the summer months, it is important that we continue to interview/tape as many folks as we can and we need your help. Please think of someone you would like to interview. I will give you a short training session and send you off with a tape recorder, notebook and other supplies. And if you think your own stories might be of interest to others, you can tape yourself or write or type an account. With your help, we can do a great job.

Call me or leave a message at 508 945-2081.

Thank you.

*Nancy H. Koerner, President*

### *A treasure worth preserving*



Chatham Historical Society

### 2007-2008 Old Village Association Officers and Directors

*President* Nancy Koerner  
*Vice-President* Debbie Aikman  
*Treasurer* Mary Ann Gray  
*Assist. Treasurer* Mary Olmsted  
*Secretary* Ann O’Connell

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# When Architecture Turns to “Kitsch”

Roget's Thesaurus defines “eclectic” as “selecting the best from various sources,” while Webster states that “heterogeneous” means “using several sources.” Residential architecture today, particularly when it comes to remodeling and renovations of existing examples of the finer styles of residences in our communities, has shown that often Webster's version has been taken to the extreme. The “best from various sources” has not been taken. The features usually incorporated certainly can be considered heterogeneous. But why might they not be homogeneous – “similar, consistent, the same” – instead?

In this atmosphere of building up, building out for more space, adding fenestration for more light and better views, owners are turning to brochures in the big box-stores, searching for ideas and trying to save money by paying less for mass-produced architectural components to be used to solve their expansion needs.

The recent passing of the American artist, Robert Rauschenberg, brings to mind another word from that era, “kitsch” – defined by Webster as “pretentious, but shallow pop-art.” This is not to say that

Rauschenberg's works were pretentious or shallow, but his many famous, recognized works, combining three-dimensional objects, paint and photographs, were done in what is known today in a style typical of the pop-art era. He used several sources of materials, but he was creating something new, not adding to something existing. It seems that today we are reaching a “kitschy” period in residential, and even in commercial architecture. Victorian, Queen Anne, Second Empire and older house styles all had features such as towers and turrets, and all had a variety of functional styles of these features. Lighthouses and windmills, on the other hand, were unique in their own design and function. But a lighthouse, as a substitute for a Queen Anne turret, on an existing house, becomes “kitschy.” Bandstands were stand-alone functional facilities in parks and village squares. But why use them as the corner of a wrap-around porch, or veranda, added to an existing residence, except perhaps as a Whit Tileston memorial in Chatham? Teddy Roosevelt at his summer residence “Sagamore” did not try to replicate the bandstand he often spoke from in the corner

of Oyster Bay on Long Island. Why can't we just recreate a true Victorian or Queen Anne wrap-around porch?

“This Old House” magazine often features excellent articles on the do's and don'ts when remodeling fine examples of the buildings of the past. A half-Cape, doubled in size appropriately, using matching, even “faux” wood, stone, shingles and trim, and energy-efficient windows (unless the house falls under Historic Preservation regulations) to become a full Cape, certainly is an acceptable solution to meet the space needs of a new owner. Adding Palladian fenestration and eyebrow dormers, to me, would be “kitsch,” a heterogeneous attempt to be cute – but, instead, pretentious, and shallow. Imitation widow's-walks on flat roofed, contemporary town office buildings and replicas of windmills and lighthouses as tower additions to existing houses, would be the same. Chatham deserves more thoughtful solutions to its space needs than what we are presently seeing proposed.

*Bob Aikman*

*Bob Aikman, a retired architect from Sea Cliff, New York, is presently a consultant with Brookhaven National Laboratory*

## Saving Historic Materials

### Part Two: Storing Vintage Clothing and Accessories

*Note: This is the second part of an article by Mary Ann Gray, Chatham Historical Society archivist and an OVA Board member, on the preservation of historic materials in private homes. The first installment (fall, 2007) dealt with books, documents and photographs. Mary Ann gives occasional workshops on this topic, and is always willing to answer individual questions concerning materials and strategies.*

As with other historic materials, fluctuations in temperature and humidity are destructive to garments. They should not be stored in the basement or attic, nor left in an unheated house over the winter. All garments should be clean and dust free. Accessories, such as shoes, gloves, and purses should be stored separately. Try to keep metal and wooden items, such as belts and buttons from touching the fabric. Never store fur at home.

There are two acceptable ways to preserve old clothing:

#### LYING FLAT IN BOXES

- Use acid-free tissue paper, or clean cotton cloth to wrap clothes
- Fold as little as possible, using rolls of paper or cloth to cushion the creases.

- Do not store in cardboard or plastic containers. Archival boxes are the best choice. If using cedar trunks, make sure that the fabric does not touch the wood. (Note: the moth protection of cedar disappears with time.)
- Check clothing and refold once a year.
- Keep boxes off the floor.

#### OR ON HANGERS

- Hangers should be padded. Avoid metal or plastic.
- Use cotton “dust covers” – not plastic or dry cleaning bags.
- If storing in closets, make sure there is air circulating around items.
- Do not hang fragile, damaged or heavy fabrics.

If you are like this editor, with artifacts – historic and not – piled up everywhere there is space, all this information may be daunting. But, taking a little at a time, you can begin to save meaningful mementoes for future generations.



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www.oldvillagechatham.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Save These Dates**  
**Iced Tea**  
**and**  
**Cool Conversation**

**July 23 at 3:30 p.m.**

102 Main Street  
(home of  
Naomi Turner and David Veach)

**A Neighborhood Get Together  
and Schmooze**

*Old Timers:  
Plan to attend and bring a  
new Old Village neighbor*

**Annual Meeting**

**August 24th at 7:00 p.m.**  
(coffee and dessert at 6:30)

Speaker ~ Mike Pease, Pease Boat  
Works and Marine Railway

Chatham Beach and Tennis Club

**Congratulations to the Coast Guard on the**  
*200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chatham Coast Guard Station*

Old Village homeowners are honored to have the men  
and women of the Coast Guard as our neighbors and  
appreciate their years of service to the community.

**Thank You!**



Chatham Lights, Chatham, Mass.

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