



Newsletter of the Old Village Association of Chatham, Massachusetts

Volume V

Issue 2

Spring, 2003

Iced Tea and Cool Conversation

Focus Groups Planned for Old Village Association Members, Summer 2003

The Old Village Association has planned a series of three focus groups, "Iced Tea and Cool Conversations", to be held this summer. While the topics are serious, the format will be relaxed, with the goal of having a real conversation and, at the same time, a relaxed afternoon. Each session will be limited to 15 people.

Session One

ZONING? AFFORDABLE HOUSING? WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE PLANNING BOARD?

Gloria Freeman, a member of the Planning Board, will join the discussion.

Thursday, July 17 at 4:00 p.m.
at the home of Sally Daniels
45 School Street

Session Two

MANAGING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: BOARD OF HEALTH ISSUES AND ANSWERS

Paul Kelley, Board of Health member, will be a participant.

Thursday, July 24 at 4:00 p.m.
at the home of Leslie and Rick Doyle
96 Water Street

Session Three

THE BIG SCHMOOZE

Worried? Annoyed? Happy as a clam? Come let the Board of the Old Village Association know what you're thinking so we can serve you better.

Thursday, August 7, 4:00 p.m.
20 Water Street
"The Porches"

communicate their concerns and interests to the Association Board.

IMPORTANT! If you are interested in attending one or more of these sessions, please call Debbie Aikman at 945-8969 or Carol Pacun at 945-1627. ASAP!

First come, first served.

A Web Site in the Old Village Association's Future

At its May meeting, the Board of the Old Village Association voted unanimously to go forward in planning a web site for the Old Village, with an emphasis on the National Register District. New Board member Mary Ann Gray, who has been instrumental in creating a web site for the Chatham Historical Society, will be leading the effort. In the next months, Board members will be talking with web site planners who have a special interest in historic areas. The goal is to have a something up and running by the next

Newsletter. The site will be developed incrementally, but hopefully the final product will be a resource which both provides information and enhances the Association's ability to reach members concerning neighborhood and town issues.

In the initial stages, the emphasis will be on educating the public about the historical character of Old Village streetscapes and architecture. The Board is especially sensitive to privacy issues for homeowners and will always get approval before picturing any individual houses, or writing about their history. The proposed web site will be discussed at the Annual Meeting. The Board is

anxious to have input from members about what they want – and do not want – to be included.

Annual Meeting Mark Your Calendars

The Annual Meeting of the Old Village Association will be held on Sunday, August 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Chatham Beach and Tennis Club. If you have items you would like to put on the agenda, call Debbie Aikman at 945-8969.



From the President

Issues, issues, and more issues. The recent annual Town Meeting had many. The controversial Main Street School conversion is now on its way, with \$1.865 million having been voted for hazardous material removal, demolition of all but the front section, and architectural drawings for a facility which will include an indoor swimming pool and a gymnasium. Construction funds totaling \$8.636 million will be voted at the May '04 Town Meeting. Design funds were also approved for a new DPW building, projected to cost \$3 million. The proposed boat haul-out facility for the MCI site was defeated. The Long Range Comprehensive Plan was adopted, along with new rules and regulations pertaining to the Historic Business District. As Chatham homeowners, we will all be affected, in one way or another, by these votes.

Future issues for voters include wastewater facilities in '05-'06 @\$11 million, a new police station/annex facility in '06-'07 @over \$7 million, a new fire station in '07-'08 @\$5.5 million and sewage collection system expansion, beginning in '09.

With the exception of wastewater, none of the previously mentioned issues are specific to the Old Village, and therefore, any action taken by members of our Association must be done on an individual basis. With regard to issues that directly impact the Old Village, members have been encouraged to speak out at meetings of town boards, while our Board has been careful in the past not to represent the Association unless we are sure that we have your support.

It has been suggested that perhaps the OVA board should be more proactive on issues that affect our members. Should we make public statements and, if so, how will we determine what's appropriate? The only way to know the answer to this question is to hear from our members. From the 86 responses to our survey, done a year ago, we had 46% interested in focus groups. Issues of importance included safety problems and congestion at the Overlook (41%), further parking restrictions on Bridge St. (37%), a sidewalk around the corner and crosswalks at the intersection of Bridge and Main Streets (53%), adding stop signs (42%), police monitoring of traffic speed (36%), daily Town cleanup of Lighthouse Beach (48%), a crosswalk at Andrew Hardings Lane (48%), the need to sewer the entire Old Village (41%) and a sign for National Register District somewhere in the Village (52%) –only 12% want new street signs. As a follow-up to the survey, this summer we are planning to hold focus groups in order to get more input on these and other important town issues. We can then present some specifics at our August Annual Meeting, where members might give us further guidance on positions we could take. Your Board would follow up with public statements for the OVA, knowing that we have the support of our membership.

As promised, those of you who are returning for the summer will thankfully find our neighborhood pretty much the same as when you left. We finally have warm weather to welcome you back, and we look forward to the rhythms of summer. Don't forget to put a focus group on your calendar!

Debbie Aikman, President

Copies of National Register District Nomination Bound and Ready to Go

The National Register District nomination papers are at the Talin Bookbindery in Yarmouthport where they will be bound as a permanent record of the placement of the Old Village on the National Register of Historic Places. The Board of the Old Village Association put together five copies of the nomination, along with materials relevant to the final application. The books will be donated to the Eldredge Public Library, the Chatham Historical Commission, the Chatham Historical Society and the Nickerson Memorial Library at Cape Cod Community College. One copy will be kept in Old Village files.

The book contains the application itself, which is almost 100 pages long, and details the history and architecture of the area. An appendix provides a timeline of the progress of the application, along with informational materials sent out to property owners concerning National Register Districts on Cape Cod, correspondence



with the Massachusetts Historical Commission about the application, a record of the final meeting in Chatham as well as Cape Cod Commission Guidelines for National Register Properties on Cape Cod.

Since the successful application for the National Register, members of both the Old Village Association and the Chatham Historical Commission have met with people from other Cape towns who are considering a nomination. The Association Board feels that by including the materials about the process, we will be providing a much-needed research document as well as an historical record of the nomination.

An Overview of the Overlook

The Overlook is probably Chatham's most popular tourist attraction. It is certainly the most spectacular, with views of the Atlantic, framed by the shifting sands of north and south beaches, ever-changing but always offering some new perspective on the miracle of nature at work.

Old Village homeowners view this vista as an awesome example of the wonders of nature. But also, as a bit of a pain in the neck. Along with pristine sand and vast ocean come cars, tour buses, trolleys and a group of people so completely overwhelmed by the experience that, ignoring any pedestrian rules known to a civilized society, they wander between cars, out into the road, turning a busy public street into a photographer's studio. This is a nightmare for those of us who must drive by on a regular basis: we may be an ornery group, but I don't know a soul who wants to plow down a visitor in the throes of adoring our neighborhood and its views.

For good or bad, this Newsletter section is dedicated to the Overlook, or, as the old-timers would have it, "James Head," with a few musings on its history. Jared Fulcher, a long time supporter of our historic area, has written a brief essay on Alfred Harding, one of the Old Village's most picturesque businessmen. We also include a poem by Harding, which Jared read at Poetry Night at the Eldredge Public Library.

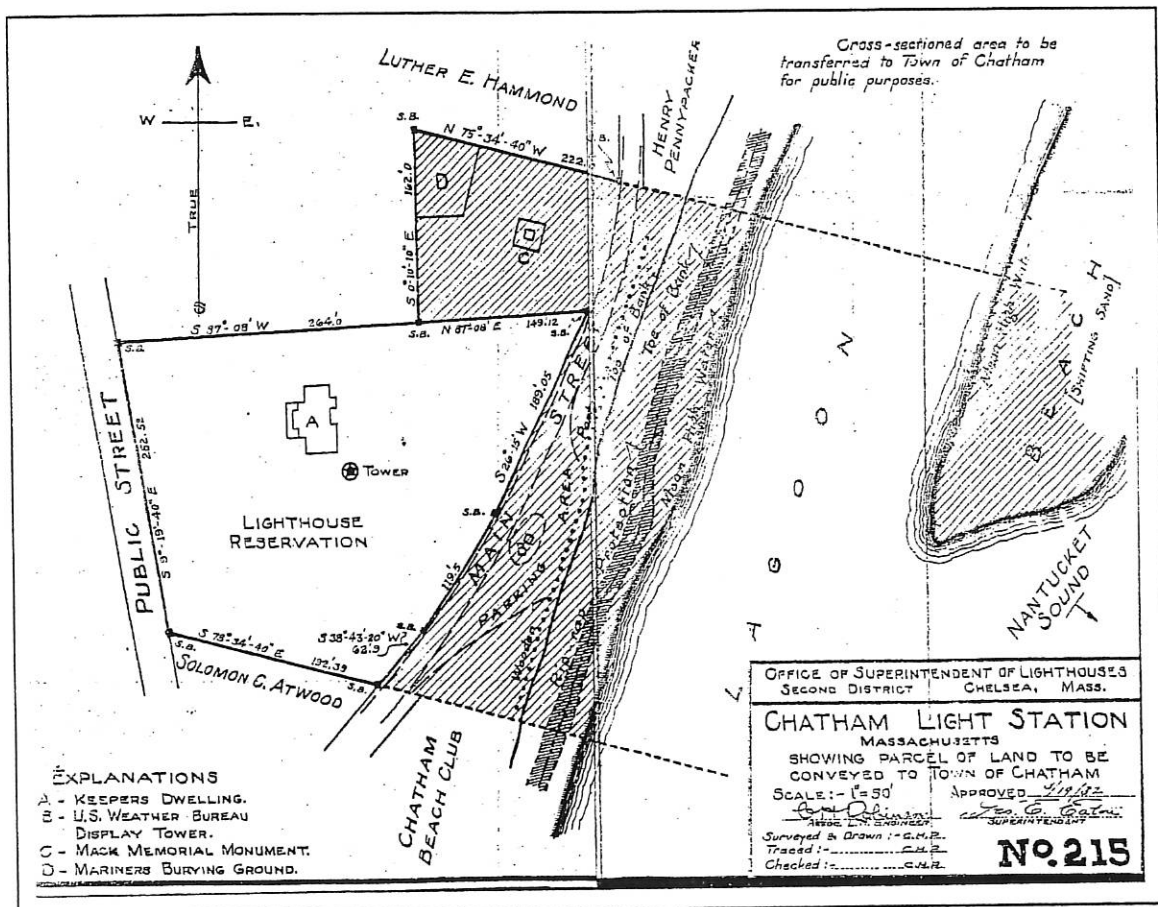
The Overlook as we know it today came into being when the twin lights were moved back from the eroding beach in 1871. Due to modern technology, it was no longer necessary

to have two lighthouses to beam the Chatham signal, so one of the lights was moved to Eastham; the other hauled over to the Coast Guard Station complex, where it is now.

The land in front of the Coast Guard Station, which now comprises the Overlook parking lot and a part of Main Street, remained under government ownership until 1935 when it was deeded to the town. By a special Act of Congress, the Secretary of Commerce was authorized to convey the land to Chatham "for public-park and recreational purposes" (with the right of the United States to) "resume the title of this grant in case at any time the property ceases to be used for the purpose defined in the law or for some other wholly public use." The land was officially turned over on August 17th, 1935. Reports to the town submitted by the Parks Department before that date imply that, to some, the decision was perhaps a bit too long in coming. Commissioners Raymond Eldredge and Geo C. Cahoon wrote that "while the area does not officially belong to the town, it is in our care" and bemoaned the presence of a signal tower in the parking lot. "When the government finally deeds this area to the town, we hope to have the Signal Tower removed to the lighthouse grounds."

Indeed, the 1935 map submitted with the deed (below) shows the U.S. Weather Bureau Display Tower still in place. Note also that the property given to the town not only includes the parking lot, Main Street area, the beach, the Mack Memorial Monument, and Mariners Burying Ground,

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Overlook - continued from page 3

but also the "shifting sand beach easterly of the lagoon" - a version of which can, of course, clearly be seen today!

These documents from 1935 also show the historic houses which still encircle the Overlook: those of Luther Hammond, Henry Pennypacker, and Solomon C. Atwood. The newest structure was the Chatham Beach and Tennis Club, to the south of the parking lot. The land for the Club was purchased in 1927 by Helen Yeaw for \$11,800 for the purpose of establishing a private beach club, mainly to keep the children in the neighborhood occupied and out of trouble. The clubhouse itself, designed by architect Edward Sears Reed (who also designed the Chatham Bars Inn), was completed in 1929. For the next four years, the Club sponsored a Fourth of July fireworks display at the Overlook. In the Chatham Monitor in 1930, A.W. Guild wrote, "It was a very beautiful exhibit, enjoyed by the town as well as by the members of the Club. The task of untangling autos afterward was not as simple but was accomplished without mishap." It was not the jumble of cars that put an end to the Beach Club's fireworks, but the necessity of belt-tightening during the depression.

In 1938, the Town allowed the Tower Optical Company of South Norwalk, Connecticut to install binoculars for the public on a consignment basis for ten cents a look (now raised to twenty-five cents). But, except for new signs limiting parking, there were few major changes over the next several decades until 1987, when the ocean, fueled by a powerful storm, broke through North Beach. The Halloween storm of 1991 caused massive erosion of the already weakened bank in front of the parking lot. The Town was forced torevet what was left of the bank, and in the process erected a chain-link fence to keep people from venturing too close to the edge. A family of foxes promptly moved into the crevasses of the new rocks, and crowds of spectators, anxious to see the changing shore, jammed the parking lot and Old Village streets in the hope of seeing the hundred year cycle for themselves.

In 1994, Margaret Swanson, Town Planner, asked for transportation enhancement funding from the Cape Cod Commission for "the addition of several information displays, park benches, bicycle racks, telephone service and a taxi/shuttle drop off at the Lighthouse Overlook." While some of these plans seemed reasonable, no one much liked the idea being floated about for an observation deck jutting out onto the beach from the Overlook. While the bike racks were installed, the display boards which were to be placed in the recessed areas of the chain link fence were victims of an ever growing distaste for what one resident called an "Alcatrazian" structure. Finally, in the face of growing opposition, the Selectmen voted to remove the fence. After debating about replacements, the Parks Department planted some rugosa and left the entire stretch devoid of any fencing at all. So far the worst fears concerning people careening down the

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Alfred Harding's Ice Cream Shop: A Business by the Sea

By Jared Fulcher

Alfred C. Harding was born in Chatham on April 22, 1849 to Silas and Clarisa Harding. Silas was a mariner, but Alfred decided to choose another career. He went into the ice cream business, starting around 1880, with another Chathamite, Calvin D. Hammond. They opened their "Seaside Pavilion" in a small, one-gabled barn on the bluff near the lights at the site of Tim Pennypacker's old house. Alfred and Calvin named their business "Atlantic Saloon, Harding and Hammond Confectionary." They sold ice cream, candy and fruit. Later, their one-gable barn was enlarged to two gables to accommodate more product. The barn was torn down around the turn of the century and replaced with a one-gable cottage similar in architecture to the first barn. The cottage was enlarged around 1917 to two gables showing much similarity to the second barn. That house currently occupies the site.

(NOTE: The poem below, written by Alfred C. Harding, was originally printed in the Bee Job Print Newspaper of Harwich in 1896 signifying the 16th annual opening of the business.)

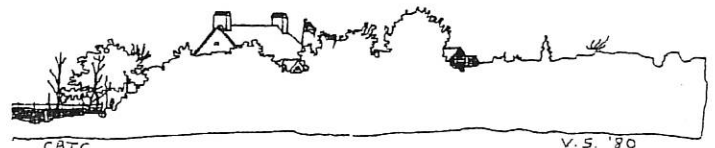
For 15 years I've turned the crank
for the making of ice cream
Do I like it? No sir, not a bit
I would rather freeze by steam

But we cannot do as we always would
In this busy, busy world
So I keep doing the best I can
And keep the freezer cold

On James' Head, I used to be
But I am there no longer
Just south of the lights, you will find me now
Down on Solomon's Corner

I am there for to stay
And for business as well
Just give me a call
And see what I have to sell

Fair dealing is my motto
And I consider it the best
For down weight and good measure
Is the Scriptural Text.



Drawing by Vito Sammartano with the permission of the
Chatham Beach and Tennis Club

Overlook - continued from page 4

embankment have proved groundless. Eventually, a shuttle to the Overlook was tried for a couple of summers, but lack of funding will leave 2003 shuttle-free.

The increasing crowds at the Overlook and Lighthouse Beach present difficult problems for the town and for the neighborhood. Questions about traffic, public safety, and restroom facilities continue to be raised, without any definitive solutions at hand. Plans for lifeguards on the beach, or a trained medic sitting in a parked car at the Overlook in case of an emergency, have been put on hold at least for this summer. Public officials continue to avoid the question of public bathrooms. In 1936, the Park Commissioners reported that "sooner or later some action must be taken in providing a "comfort station" on this property for the convenience of summer visitors."

We cannot blame those who think "later." The fact remains that this popular, glorious vista is at the very edge of a densely populated historic neighborhood - a circumstance that is unique on the Cape - and has always presented difficulties which are almost impossible to solve. Meanwhile, the summer of 2003 is upon us. Enjoy the Overlook: we in the Old Village have the "best seat" in town!

Old Village Association, Inc.

<i>President</i>	Debbie Aikman
<i>Vice-President</i>	Bob Walsh
<i>Treasurer</i>	Dick Towne
<i>Clerk</i>	Ann O'Connell
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Debbie Aikman	Ann O'Connell
Mary Ann Gray	Carol Pacun
Nancy Koerner	Sam Streibert
David MacAdam	Dick Towne
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Bob Walsh	

Architect's Corner

Theodore P. (Sam) Streibert

Old Chatham Village Architecture

Many Old Village properties benefit from having a barn, shack, shanty or even a garage. Some barns and garages are quite beautifully designed because they share the trim details of and are in proportion with the main house that they serve. Others, the shacks and shanties, are quite mundane in their appearance because the materials or the details are built with only economy in mind.

Often these structures suffer from neglect and as a result are in disrepair, even in a state of near collapse. Owners aware of the asset that exists on their property are eager to know what to do first to bring their barn or garage back to usefulness and new life.

Some might wonder why I consider such an eyesore to be an asset. It is grandfathered. These old structures usually were built very near the lot lines or were tucked away in the backyard, situated to maximize the limited space on the property. Today, they have been overtaken by the strictures of current zoning codes which require a setback from lot lines. Thus, the structure cannot be built today in its current location without a zoning variance. Repairing and even restoring the structure will change the eyesore into an asset for the property.

A second reason for restoring and maintaining older accessory structures is that they are part of the historic fabric of the Old Village as a working town. Each structure goes with the other and serves to show the context that was or might have been an earlier Old Village. And the best reason of all is that the structure will be returned to usefulness and in turn add to the property value and to that of the neighborhood.

What must be done? First, the structure must be stabilized by providing temporary intermediate supports and cross bracing. Second, any openings in roofs or walls must be temporarily patched to prevent intrusion by water from rain, wind or absorption up from the ground. Third, the contents and debris of any kind, including brush and leaves for a few feet around the perimeter and below the top of foundation, should be removed.

At this point a list of remedial activities could include repair of foundations, selective replacement of sills, columns, rafters, wall or roofing planks. Certainly the exterior surfaces of white cedar shingles, pine trim boards painted white, and red cedar roof shingles would quickly put a bright new face on an old working structure and allow it to remind us of our small town working heritage.



From *Some Old Chatham Houses*, January, 1970, Chatham Historical Society, Inc. Artist, Priscilla Eldredge

Old Village Association Newsletter	Contributors	Carol Pacun
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The Old Village Association, Inc.
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Important Meetings to Remember

“ICED TEA AND COOL CONVERSATIONS”

July 17, 24 and August 7

See page 1 for time and place. Limited attendance: sign up now!

OLD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, August 24 at 7:00 p.m.
 Chatham Beach and Tennis Club

CHATHAM ALLIANCE PUBLIC FORUM ON WIND FARMS FOR NANTUCKET SOUND

Late August, time and place TBA

The Chatham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation is planning this meeting to inform the public on the possible creation of a wind farm in Nantucket Sound by a private company. Although this project would provide a substantial amount of electricity and cut down on the use of fossil fuel power production, opponents are concerned about the size and amount of wind turbines and their effect on fishing and boating in the Sound, and they stress the need for environmental review. The Alliance program will present both sides of the issue. For further information, call Debbie Aikman or Carol Pacun, who represent the Old Village on the Alliance Steering Committee.



Andrew Hardings Lane Beach News (or Lack Thereof)

The Association continues to monitor the situation at AHL Beach...some erosion occurred during the winter, and summer residents will find pieces of the old parking lot newly emerged, here and there. The Town's regular dredging operation has just finished dumping sand in the harbor eastward of Holway and AHL, some of which (hopefully) should find its way onshore. The Perry property is still on the market at a price that is far more than the OVA might be willing to consider, but we are trying to facilitate communication with the Perry's and the Town in the hope that some arrangement can be negotiated that would be beneficial to all concerned... so, as we said, ain't much real news....