

Keeping Our History Alive



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FROM THE EDITOR

I know I'm preaching to the converted when I say the Old Village is a singularly special corner of the world. While it changes visually year to year with the flow of new neighbors and old, each of whom infuse their own aesthetic and energy into our community, a reliable friendliness prevails. Even when it's quiet off-season, or perhaps because it's so, it's easier to see how our handsome architecture, while guarding our privacy, promotes a generosity of spirit. Clearly the structures we've created foster this openness, especially in the form of one of my favorite building elements: the porch. My friend and fellow walker Joan Horrocks has wandered our neighborhood and captured several of these gems for this issue.

As a name, the porch has many linguistic cousins from various parts of the world: veranda, piazza, portico, loggia. Each of these sound to our ear much more aristocratic than our often humble American porch. Indeed, in physical terms as well, our porch has evolved as a unique

piece of vernacular architecture with many functions: a space to linger on a fine day, or to get shelter from an inclement one, a spot to cast tackle and toys for ready access, a bridge between outdoors and in where we can savor a book, a drink, a song, a view. Above all, an Old Village porch seems to me an extension of our friendly impulses, a hearty handshake that greets us and beckons us to enjoy each other's company - as shown coincidentally in the delightful image accompanying Carol Pacun's piece. It's the camaraderie we feel made manifest and durable. And this is why preserving our structures is essential to the OVA mission.

Special thanks go to our stalwart contributors: John Whelan, Debbie Aikman, Carol Pacun, Bill Horrocks, Joan Horrocks, Nancy Koerner, and David MacAdam. We extend a special note of gratitude as well to the Chatham Historical Society and to Maps of Antiquity for the use of images - both are incomparable resources.

Wishing you a joyous holiday season,

Jennifer Longworth
newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings Fellow Villagers,

Summer has finally arrived with bright sun, blue skies and the usual astounding number of happy vacationers. It has been a quiet year for the Old Village with only the occasional sound of nail guns from our many construction sites in the neighborhood. I have included an important article in this newsletter explaining what to do if you receive a notice from the ZBA announcing a neighbor's building project as well as tips for you as you try to navigate our many boards and commissions as you are planning your own alterations.

August will be a busy month. We look forward to our annual Kids For Food event as well as the Porch's get together. The guest speaker at our annual meeting on August 19th will be Bob Staake, renowned children's author and New Yorker cover artist.

I hope to see you at these events and wish you a lovely summer season.

Warmly,

Winnie Lear, President
directors@oldvillagechatham.org



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WHERE HAVE ALL THE CHILDREN GONE? ~ Carol Pacun

Back when Art Gould rented boats, the Squire was called the New Yorker and newspapers were available to be picked up at the Mayflower, everyone knew exactly when summer was over. By 4 o'clock each Labor Day, Chatham was eerily empty of tourists and summer people. Old Village residents settled in for the off season.

Now, however, summer seems to disappear in almost unnoticeable pieces. Perhaps the first hint of an on-coming fall is a voice overheard at the market complaining that this year school starts, not after Labor Day, but in the middle of August. At this point locals start to theorize that, perhaps, tourists on Main Street and the overlook are thinning out. A reality check proves otherwise. Yet around this time, Old Village families with young children begin their typical evacuation, driving away in cars loaded with an assortment of boxes, bicycles, surf boards, children and dogs. Older non-resident homeowners take their time, perhaps waiting for Florida to cool down. By the late fall, more and more houses are empty and dark. An evening walk is a walk alone.

Full time residents are often pictured as anxious for everyone to just go away, the sooner the better. Sure, we complain, often loudly, about the crowded streets, people who can't find the lighthouse, tour buses - you name it. But all the major and minor inconveniences do not apply to our "summer people" who for a few months enliven a too quiet winter Old Village of empty houses and mostly senior citizens. In short, in the summer we become a diverse, vibrant neighborhood: a neighborhood, the old timers might say, which brings back memories of long ago when the Old Village was a real community all year around.



Summertime fun on Independence Day - photo courtesy N. Koerner

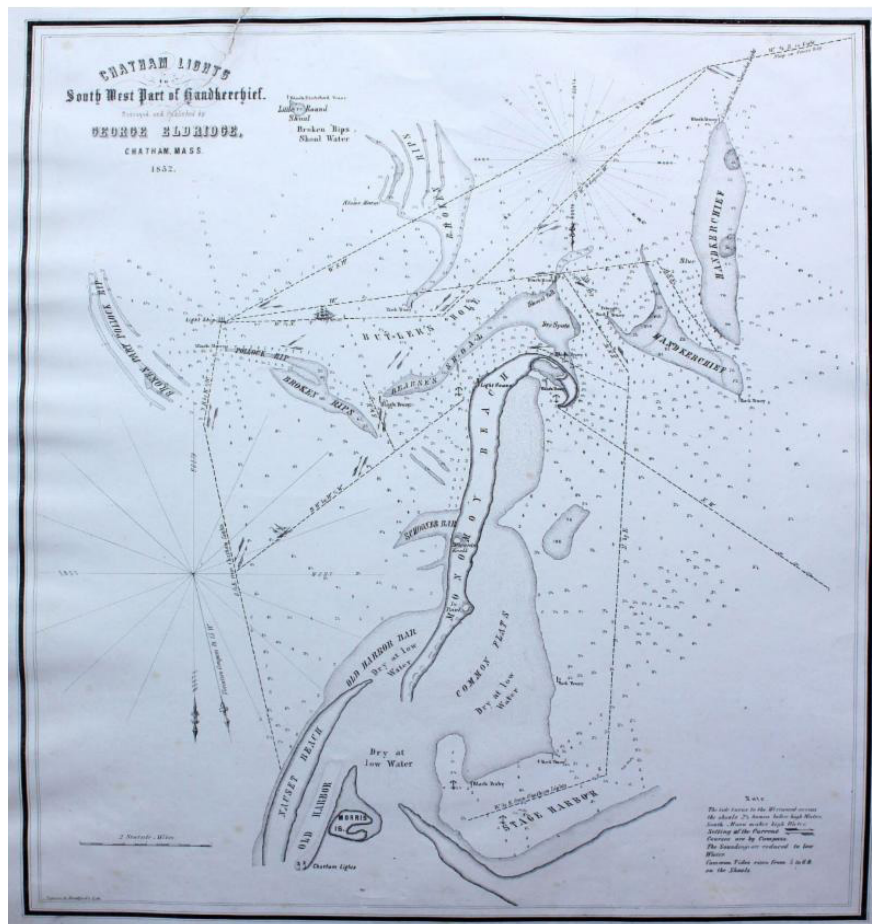
Today, off season, there are no children playing in the Village. For years, almost nobody noticed that our emphasis on high end development, while successful, had sacrificed our sense of community and closed out young working families and their children. The difference between a vibrant summer and an empty winter in the Old Village pinpoints the issue, as does the Village's history as a working class full time community filled with children. The Old Village Association's efforts to protect historic houses was not only to save buildings but to preserve a very special way of life.

Long ago, the Old Village was almost as busy in the winter as in the summer. When you get a group of old timers together, they may have a variety of sometimes conflicting memories, but they all agree without exception that they were blessed to grow up in the Old Village. The late Charlotte Forgeron (a beloved principal of the Chatham elementary school) spoke for everyone when she said, in a 1997 lecture, "There was something very snug and safe about growing up in that neighborhood. It was a very special place to grow up. Get any number of us together and within minutes we are in gales of laughter over one situation or another." Those days were hardly a nirvana. Money was in short supply, many local families were dependent on summer jobs, a world war loomed. Difficulties and celebrations were shared. That made all the difference.

So, to our summer friends, thank you and your family for joining us for yet another season. You brighten our lives and help enliven - if only for a few months - a neighborhood we all cherish.

CHATHAM MAYFLOWER 400

The year 2020, almost upon us, will be a special occasion for descendants of Mayflower passengers who arrived in North America almost 400 years ago and established the Plymouth colony. It is also special for descendants of the native American Wampanoags who greeted the arriving settlers who subsequently became known as the Pilgrims. Major celebrations of this event are being planned for Plymouth, Provincetown and elsewhere. Ron Nickerson, a Mayflower descendant and Chatham resident suggested to me that a Chatham-centered celebration would be appropriate considering the importance of the geography and underwater topology of the coast in our area which changed the course of colonial history in a very important way. We decided to form a local committee to plan and implement possible commemorations and exhibits focusing on the consequential events that took place off our coast on November 9-10, 1620 (Old Calendar). A plaque describing our area's close brush with the Mayflower was placed at the Chatham Lighthouse overlook in the Old Village several years ago.



1852 Eldridge Chart - courtesy Chatham Historical Society

The Chatham part of the story starts on 9 November 1620 shortly after the Mayflower first sighted North America while off Nauset Beach east of Wellfleet. The settlers had a patent from King James to settle in the area of the Hudson River some 240 miles to the southwest.

Settlement on the much closer coast of New England was tempting, but after some discussion onboard, the Mayflower began to sail south toward her legal destination. Before the day was out the wind died and the ship became dangerously involved in the shoals of Broken Pollack Rip to the east and south of Monomoy Island. Fortunately, Master Jones was able to extricate his ship from the shoals and reverse course to sail north. He anchored overnight off the coast of what is now Chatham before continuing north the next day and finally anchoring in what is now Provincetown harbor on 11 November 1620.



Mayflower descendants gather at the Lighthouse overlook - photo courtesy Tim Wo

On the basis of less than a week's notice in the Cape Cod Chronicle a gathering of about a dozen interested local Mayflower descendants assembled at the lighthouse plaque in the Old Village to discuss how we should go forward with plans. In addition to Ron Nickerson and myself, there were present David Martin, past president of the Cape Cod Genealogical Society, Danielle Jeanloz and Kevin Wright, Executive Director and Assistant Director, respectively, of the Atwood House museum of the Chatham Historical Society as well as the following local Mayflower descendants: Carol Wister, Eve Dalmolen, Michael Smith, Cherrill Lewis, Janet Giorgio, Judy Hatch, Richard Hopkins and Leo Giorgio. Tim Wood, editor of The Cape Cod Chronicle, covered the event. He wrote an article and took a picture which appeared (above) on the front page of the November 15th issue of the Chronicle.

Several more local Mayflower descendants, who were unable to attend the November 9th gathering at the Chatham Lighthouse overlook, contacted Ron Nickerson to express interest in joining our Chatham-Mayflower 400 project. These include: Bill Leigh, Katie Waters,

Lucy Buckley, Richard Buckley, Donna Connor, Linda Johnson, Sarah Wilsterman, Stephen Daniel, Bob Bogardus, Ginny Nickerson, Deborah Ewen, Cathy Strizzi, Abigail Doherty, Judy Cunniss, Karyn Sandstrom, Shareen Davis, Chris Low and Brenda Collins. We invite any and all Mayflower descendants in the Old Village and environs to contact us and join the group (krnicker@comcast.net). We will meet again in mid-January with email notification in advance.

Finally, as an historical aside, I note the irony of the fact that the first detailed hydrographic survey of the Pollack Rip area was made by Chatham's George Eldridge (1820-1900). In 1852 he published his first chart, "Chatham Lights to Southwest part of Handkerchief", which launched his and his descendants' chart making enterprise which has been described as one of the two most exceptional of the private American chart publishers (Peter J. Guthorn, United States Coastal Charts 1783-1861, Schiffer, Exton, PA, 1984). Eldridge's chart can be viewed in the Nautical Chart Virtual Gallery of the Atwood House Museum on the website: www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org.

—Bill Horrocks, Curator of Charts, Atwood House Museum



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CHATHAM IN 1922

Recently, I was looking through my collection of books about Chatham and came across the “The Cape and South Shore Blue Book and Social Register.” It is a strange book which combined a list of supposedly socially prominent people and advertisements from local merchants. The ads probably made the book financially successful and the people listings most likely encouraged sales of the book. It should not be confused with “The Social Register” which is a semi-annual publication listing families that belong to high society. This little book has been around since The Gilded Age when New York City newspaper man, Louis Keller, created a listing of families, many of whom were descended from the most prominent early settlers of the country. People were chosen for listing by an anonymous advisory committee. The first edition listed 5000 people from the northeast section of the United States. Inclusion was very important during The Gilded Age when excess was the order of the day. Well-connected, wealthy people could stay in touch through The Social Register. It is still published twice a year now and is divided by areas of the country. Individual “Registers” were done for New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Newport, etc. As important as it may have been at one time to certain people, it was always pretentious and being listed has become less significant through the years. Malcolm Forbes and his family owned The Social Register from 1976 to 2014. Christopher Wolf, a longtime listed member, now publishes it.

Old money was important for listing as were Ivy League colleges, trust funds, debutante balls, fox hunting, yachting, and polo. However, 19th century robber barons, as disreputable as they were, got included because of their fabulous wealth. The “Register” was initially limited to White Anglo-Saxon Protestant families. A divorce was a reason to be dropped prior to World War II.



Mattaquasson Hotel - photo courtesy Chatham Historical Society

Well, our Cape Cod book has nothing to do with all that. Nevertheless, it is interesting in that it does identify some regular summer visitors that were in Chatham in 1922. It also told of other features of the town in those days such as the local railroad. The rail line was extended to Chatham from Harwich in 1886 with financial backing by Chatham native, Marcellus Eldredge. The track to Chatham was patched on to the line from Harwich and continued operation until 1937. I was amazed to learn that the Chatham line served 22,000 passengers in 1891. Of course, shipments of fish and cranberries always helped to keep the line in business.

Several Old Village hotels of yesteryear are listed. The Hammond House, the Hawes House, the Dill Cottages are included. The Dill Cottages on Holway Street has morphed into the Surfside Inn. On the edges of the Old Village were the Mattaquasson, the Hawthorne Inn and the Monomoyick Inn. The Mattaquasson was an upscale hotel and operated from the late 1800's until 1956. Both the Mattaquasson and the Hawthorne Inn were large cottage-style buildings facing Chatham Harbor. The Hawthorne, which was owned by the Courtnell family, held on a few more years before becoming the Hawthorne Motor Inn of today. The Monomoyick became the Cranberry Inn and eventually the Chatham Inn and Wine Bar at 359 Main Street. Hotels were very important in the 20's bringing visitors to Chatham, which had only 1737 year-round residents in 1920. Chatham which totaled 2710 residents way back in 1860 had seen a steady population decline during the prior 60 years. The end of local agriculture and the diminished number of fish were instrumental in the population decline.



Dill Cottages - photo courtesy Maps of Antiquity

Local advertisers included the Wayside Inn, Quilty's, E.B. Sampson, Electrical Contractor and John H. Shepard, Plumbing and Heating, among others. John Shepard was my grandfather, as well as Winnie Lear's grandfather. The people listings are of note with prominent Chatham artist, Harold Dunbar, and famous Cape Cod author, Joseph Lincoln. The Honorable Louis

Brandeis who became a Supreme Court Justice was a summer resident.

Some present-day Old Village families have forebears listed. The ones that jumped out at me included Mrs. Silmon Chase of Philadelphia who owned Porches on the Mill Pond. Dr. Herbert Dunbar was on Holway Street and the Fitz's were on Silverleaf. The Pennypackers lived in "Overlook" and the Shattucks and Yeaws were on Bridge Street.

Chatham has changed in the 96 years since this book was printed, but it is reassuring that some things in the Old Village remain the same.

—John Whelan

BOB WALSH (1943-2018)

Tribute and Memories



Bob Walsh, 1967 courtesy D. MacAdam

Bob Walsh, a year-round resident of the Old Village for nearly 60 years passed away on October 31, 2018, after a short illness. Bob was a member of the Board of Directors of the Old Village Association from its founding until he was forced to leave his family's property on School Street a few years ago. During the earliest years of the OVA he reached out to the old timers still living in the Village to win their support for the National Registry District,

something his long, year-round residency in the Old Village uniquely qualified him to do. Later in his tenure on the Board, he built and maintained a membership data base, wrote for this Newsletter, and generally advocated for preservation and conservation, particularly within the confines of the Village.

Bob's contributions to this Town were not limited to just the Old Village. He twice served on Chatham's Charter Review Committee, first in 2000 then again in 2007. He brought to these committees an amazing knowledge of Town government, and to the 2007 committee, a wealth of institutional history from his previous appointment. Later, he was a strong supporter of renovation rather than replacement of the Mitchell River Bridge.

Bob loved Chatham and the sea that surrounds it. From the time he was a young man he endeavored to do what proved to be well nigh impossible - that is to live his life the old way in the Old Village and make a living from the sea and in support of others who endeavored to do likewise.

I first met Bob in the early 1950s when he was about 8 years old, and my family began vacationing in a cottage on Sunset Lane. My mother discovered that her favorite English professor from Simmons College in the 1930s, Dr. Robert Gay, lived at the head of the lane. She soon reacquainted with him and his family. I and my brother Keith found in Dr. Gay's grandson, Bob Walsh, a fine Chatham friend. Bob was always around boats, attaching himself early on to Art Gould's boat livery and beach taxi business at foot of Andrew Harding's Lane. We never wanted for a ride to the "Outer Beach." Later Bob engineered all-night beach parties out there with his large circle of friends.

Bob's dad, Ray Walsh, was President of Wesleyan University Press, in CT. So it was no surprise that Bob began college at Wesleyan, though it was Ohio Wesleyan. His first Christmas away, he was to fly home to CT from Ohio with his dad, but at the last minute had to take a later flight. That saved Bob's life. His dad was killed when his plane collided with another over New York City in what was America's worst airline crash to date. Ray Walsh's sudden death was devastating to the family, and especially to Bob. Dr. Gay stepped in the best he could to fill the void, but within a couple years he too passed away. Bob, though very bright, never finished college. He and my brother Keith became fast friends in the later 60s while I was working my first job in San Diego. Bob and Keith (then a PhD student in Physics at Harvard) would often team up in Chatham on one hair-brained science/engineering scheme after another - crazy kites, or square-rigging a dory. Bob eventually served as groomsman at Keith and Phyllis' wedding at the Harvard Club in Cambridge in 1969.

At one point in the mid-60s I was just sitting down to dinner in my Mission Beach apartment in San Diego, and I heard a knock on the door. It was Bob. He had decided on a whim to drive

his old Ford out to California (unannounced) for a visit. We had several fine days sight-seeing together before he headed back to Chatham. Once when visiting Chatham from California I heard one trash man complain to his partner as they carried two barrels of empty beer bottles out Bob's driveway, that the problem with being a trash man is that you always learn where the good parties were - the morning after!

In 1968 I lost my research position at UC San Diego and ultimately ended up as a winter resident at our family's summer house across the street from Bob. He was then living with his mother on School Street. He took me under his wing so to speak. One Friday afternoon, he stopped over and said, "let's go hear some jazz!", The two of us, and his current girl-friend, piled in his old Ford convertible and off we went. That night we visited countless jazz bars in Greenwich Village, and must have consumed another trash barrel of beer. When dawn came at the last bar there wasn't much music left, and even fewer patrons, so we climbed back in the car and were home again on School Street before noon.

Presumably, I was using Chatham as a base to search for a new position in New England. But I was having no luck in the first year of the Nixon science funding cuts. Every place I interviewed was laying off employees, not hiring them. Bob came to my rescue as scallop season began, and took me on as "crew" on his scallop operation. He taught me the art of scalloping, and introduced me to two of the Old Village's historic community shucking shanties. As fall turned into winter I decided fishing was not for me, and ultimately secured some teaching jobs. One of these quickly turned into a full-time faculty position in mathematics at Cape Cod Community College.

From that point on Bob and I drifted apart, I stayed on as his friend and neighbor throughout my 30-year teaching career, and beyond, but Bob became ever more a private person, and we took up different orbits. Keith, on his rare visits to Chatham would always look up Bob, but in later life their heads too were in different places.

Bob took on a string of jobs after that. I never knew all the details. Significant among them was boat building and repair at Spaulding Dunbar's Old Mill Boat Yard. Spaulding was by then in retirement and there was little activity at his boat yard. Bob easily secured the use of the facilities. Among other projects he undertook was to build fiberglass skiffs that Spaulding designed using Art Gould's legendary "Alma G" as a model. He filled orders from several local fishermen. I believe there are still a couple around. As do all older boats, they stand out amongst the glitter of the more modern, mass-produced boats that crowd today's waterways. At the boat works, Bob proved an excellent mentor to several young men and women who developed specialized skills in the boat building trade, not the least my youngest brother, Lewis. At other times Bob worked briefly as a commercial fisherman, and at Cultured Clam in Dennis.

In his heyday Bob was a force to be reckoned with at Town Meeting. I remember once when Main Street reconstruction was being discussed, a local businessman suggested re-routing Rt 28 along Main St and out Shore Road to North Chatham to better steer tourist business to Main Street. Bob quickly rose and suggested a “better” option - reroute Rt 28 out Crowell Rd to relieve congestion downtown. Rt 28 remained where it is today. Another time when the decreasing relevance of Main Street businesses to the greater Chatham Community was being discussed, Bob rose and said “Chatham doesn’t need any more shoe stores.” Bob had a way of cutting through bull like a hot knife through butter.

After his mother’s death, Bob lived on in the house with his two dogs “Reno” and “Smiley” They provided him with companionship for many years, but once they passed away, he lived alone. To help make ends meet he rented out the upstairs of the house and “The Puritan” cottage behind, and more than once renovated those spaces himself for new year-round tenants. Eventually his kitchen fell into disuse, and ultimately into disrepair. Bob instead took breakfasts at Larry’s PX (if whatever old jalopy he was then driving would get him there), and dinners at the Squire. In time Bob’s health began to fail, and money was always in short supply. In later years, he secured first a part time position with the Town as Landing Officer and later as Deputy Shellfish Warden, where he monitored shellfishing in Stage Harbor at the “dike.” Ultimately Bob, who held life tenancy, lost his rights to the family house. Soon after, his siblings and their heirs were forced to give up the property, adding one more dark house to an already very dark winter neighborhood. Bob spent his last few years in Chatham’s Senior Housing.

Bob was a very special Chathamite, more committed to the community at large than many who profit so mightily from it today. He and his sort will be missed in this Town to which he gave his all. His is the story of many other local citizens who struggle to eke out a year-round existence on the underbelly of a Chatham that focuses on being a great tourist mecca and a profit generator for the few.

—David MacAdam



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The OVA Board shares this from the Charter Review Committee-

A Charter Review Committee (CRC) was appointed by the Chatham Board of Selectman in June to begin the required five-year review of the town's Home Rule Charter. The purpose of the Committee is to review the charter; to listen to the comments of interested citizens, officials and invited guests; and then to prepare a report to present to Town Meeting.

The Charter is the people's document. It describes the conduct of local government and affirms that local government exists to serve its citizens. It places local government's power in the hands of its citizens and limits the power of government, and it establishes a system of checks and balances.

During the first meeting of the CRC, the committee recognized the value of hearing from the public and private organizations as well as subdivisions of our local government. We want to encourage participation in the review. You may access the current Charter, as well as the running draft of proposed changes, by accessing the website mytowngovernment.org, selecting Chatham, MA, and then selecting Charter Review Committee from the drop-down menu.

The Charter is worthy of your attention. We hope you will include a discussion of the Charter with your membership. Should your members identify any changes that would improve the

operation of local town government, please share that information with us. We meet regularly on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 5:00 P.M. in the small meeting room of the Town Annex. If you would like to appear before the CRC to present any of your committee's suggestions, please let me know the date and time which works best for you so that I may place your appearance on the agenda. If you prefer, you may forward your committee's suggested changes, along with the rationale for those changes, to my attention. I will read them into our minutes and see that they become part of the public record.

Thank you for your kind attention to this request.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Taylor, Chr.
charterreview@chatham-ma.gov



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Old Village Association Officers 2018-2019

directors@oldvillagechatham.org

Officers: One-year terms

President: Winnie Lear
Vice President: Debbie Aikman
Treasurer: Nancy Koerner
Clerk: Bill Horrocks

Directors: 7-11, each with a three-year term

Term ending 2019

Debbie Aikman
Nancy Koerner
David MacAdam
Lisa Green

Term ending 2021

Winnie Lear
Carol Pacun
Bill Horrocks

Term ending 2020

Lisa Edge
Nancy Phelps
Jennifer Longworth
George Olmsted

Appointed

Corresponding Secretary: Lisa Edge
Assistant Treasurer: Nancy Phelps

~ Village News ~

New Sidewalks for the Old Village!



photos courtesy D. Aikman

The sidewalk project for Main Street is underway, to be completed in December. We'll then have safe walking from the Eldredge Garage all the way to Silverleaf Avenue. This is a wonderful holiday gift from the DPW and a note of appreciation has been sent to DPW Director Tom Temple.

—Debbie Aikman

Our **OVA membership** organization continues, thanks to Bob Walsh. Many years ago Bob set up a data base on Access for the Old Village membership. He helped me learn to use the system and to this day his format serves us well. The labels on your OVA mail are generated on this format and our collection of information such as your phone numbers, summer vs winter addresses, and membership years are all in this one spot (and backed-up regularly!) If the system fails I'll be looking for an Access expert but I'll bet it will outlive me as it has outlived Bob. Thank you, Bob!

—Nancy Koerner, Treasurer and Membership Chairman

Atwood House - a full schedule of wintertime events awaits you, see more [here](#) !

Chatham Alliance For Preservation and Conservation meetings are held and open to everyone, and usually from 3:30-5:00 pm, the **first Thursday of the month, September - June** (except January) at the Community Center. There is usually a speaker/lecture on a topic relevant to conservation and preservation in Chatham at each meeting. The Alliance also hosts forum/panel discussions on conservation and preservation topics of broad current interest. For more information email **David MacAdam**.



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Historical Signs for Pre-1914 Houses - Eligibility for Chatham

Historic House Signs has been revised by the Historical Commission, and now houses **100 years or older** are eligible for the white rectangular signs that, in three lines, summarize the early history of pre-1915 buildings, e.g.

Name of first owner	FRANKLYN NICKERSON
Function of building	Market
The date	c. 1850

Over 670 Chatham houses are eligible for these signs, 107 are in the Old Village. The

information and application form are available on the Town web site under **Historical Commission**. For street designations in the Old Village visit our **National Register District webpage**. Questions? Email housesignquery@gmail.com.

Get better connected! Help us conserve resources and funds by subscribing to our e-newsletters - please email newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org. Your email address will be used only for OVA communications. We welcome new contributors as well!

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Happy Holidays!
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