

Keeping Our History Alive



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FROM THE EDITOR

We have important updates and opinions about our Village and our broader community in Chatham with this issue. And we've included a little swashbuckling "beach read" for you as well!

Special thanks go to our regular contributors Debbie Aikman, Carol Pacun, Joan Horrocks, Nancy Koerner, and David MacAdam. Please pay special attention to upcoming events and dates in the Village News section.

Wishing you a happy, safe summer,
Jennifer Longworth
newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello fellow Villagers,

We are all now enjoying a beautiful July after a less than ideal spring. We were pleasantly surprised when a brand new sidewalk was recently installed in front of the lighthouse. An additional crosswalk should be in place shortly, which will certainly add a safer alternative for those crossing to the overlook. This is the first phase of a three part project which includes replacing the sidewalk from Hallett Lane to Water Street and Water Street to the new Lighthouse sidewalk.

Hopefully these improvements will be accomplished by next summer.

The planning committee for the Eldredge Garage meets regularly and will finalize its recommendations this fall. This summer the lot is open. The selectman hired Chatham Valet to manage the parking lot. There is a fee for parking for non residents and resident / taxpayers (with stickers) are provided free parking. There is also a complementary shuttle available to the beach and other locations. Improvements will hopefully be approved by the selectmen by May's town meeting but whether changes can happen by next summer is uncertain.

I hope to see many of you at the Annual Meeting which, for the first time, is scheduled early in August this year. John Whelan and Kim Rodrigues will be speaking about their popular book, I Am of Cape Cod.

I send you my best wishes for a wonderful Chatham summer, and look forward to seeing you in the neighborhood.

Warmly,

Winnie Lear, President

directors@oldvillagechatham.org

SIDEWALKS IN CHATHAM - STEPPING ON THE CRACKS



The recently repaired sidewalk at the Lighthouse during a quiet moment. Photo courtesy Debbie Aikman

Sidewalks, built and not yet built, have been a thorny issue in Chatham for as long as I can remember. This spring, there is a possibility that, finally, the town is committed to finding solutions. In June, a crew produced new sidewalks in front of the Chatham Beach and Tennis Club and resurfaced the narrow cement pathway abutting the coast guard station.

Rumor has it that the goal is to have a sidewalk (width unknown) continue on past the tip of Silverleaf Avenue to the end of Bridge Street. I do hope that the town's consultants will suggest improving the appearance (as well as the safety) of Main Street sidewalks. The present patchwork sections of pavement look as if they had been cobbled together over many decades by assorted crews with a variety of materials which, of course, they were.

Over the years, the sidewalk issue has had its own unique cast of characters and a plot line ready made for those of us who cherish old-time stories. For example, do you remember that, at one point, someone suggested honoring Chatham's august early years by replacing the Main Street sidewalks with brick? The answers came quick and clear: if you want Chatham streets to be historically accurate, go back to dirt.

I also remember with great affection the feisty lady who retired to Hammond Hill Road with her artist husband in the 1960's. As time went on, she found walking difficult. That led her to focus on the condition of Chatham's sidewalks, which she found terrifying and in need of immediate repair. When her concerns were rebuffed time and time again, she vowed to write a complaint (naming names!) in the Chronicle once a year for the rest of her life. I have no idea if she achieved that goal, but I do know that, while driving through Chatham, she was known to lower the car window and shout instructions to construction workers about their dereliction of duty. She demanded they stop what they were doing and repair the sidewalks immediately. This one way conversation also involved her taxes which in her view included the absolute right to walk to the library safely.



Congestion at the Lighthouse overlook - photo courtesy David Eldredge

Creating a sidewalk from the overlook through to Bridge Street has been a long held goal. The problem has been, and is still, the lack of space for a sidewalk, especially around the tip of Silverleaf Avenue. The gentleman who lived in the corner house, which was only a few feet from the street, was in a constant state of anxiety that the town was about to turn his tiny front yard into a mass of concrete. His concerns seemed justified, especially when he woke up on assorted mornings during the 1980's to find stakes on his property and yellow arrows on the road pointing to his house. In what we might call a typical Old Village reaction, he stopped everyone he met on Silverleaf Avenue to announce he was "going to the top". All of us suggested he take a note-taker-witness with him when he met with the town manager. Some of us even offered to accompany him. He brushed the offer aside and announced that he would go alone with his tape recorder. The Old Village Association would have a transcript of the event in a matter of days. We must have looked a little shocked. This was not standard procedure at town hall. "I wasn't CIA for nothing," he said. "I know what I'm up against." Sure enough, the transcript was delivered as promised, and is now among our valued papers. (And his yard was saved.) Unfortunately, our secret agent died this winter. Another plan seems in the works. I imagine he would have been sorry to miss the next round.

So, here we are in 2018, with more people and more traffic. (I counted six tour buses lined up together at the overlook last week.) My guess is that the issue of sidewalks will continue to be problematic. Chatham was not designed for cars, buses and hordes of people. Those who feel their properties are being invaded by the town as well as those who worry about the safety of family, friends and tourists who walk throughout the town will find compromises difficult and solutions imperfect. All of us who remember Chatham as a small town where our kids biked everywhere, streets were largely empty and sidewalks were dirt will have to adjust. Meanwhile, the history of these differences and of those who stood up to be counted will continue to make us smile. Once again, these issues are upon us, and will not easily go away.

—Carol Pacun

THE TATTLING COD - ADVENTURE ON THE HIGH SEAS

To read the full, fascinating tale click on Tattling Cod - Cruising With Harold Dunbar
courtesy of Nancy Koerner

where. At the opposite end of the shore is a doorway leading to the Tea Garden. It is an aristocratic doorway, signed by the colonial look-alike and arch, a motif repeated at various intervals around the room.

The Tea-Garden outside has marble-like tables and chairs on the terrace, shaded by large, gaily colored umbrellas. There are also tables inside, and in any weather one may perch at leisure comfortably and independently. And if you happen to go there at night, you will find the lighting effects interesting and aggressive.

If course you can buy an immense variety of things, and all these things look clean and new. I noticed some just and staffed before entering, that can be plugged into any electric light socket. There was also an edition of Professor Tardiff's "Cape Cod, 1840," the most informative book ever written about Cape Cod at one dollar a copy.

CRUISING WITH HAROLD DUNBAR

Here is a complete year of the sea, told now as true, by Seymour Pellerson, retired able seaman, who lives in Chatham near the ocean. There is an old house shaded by weather-beaten silver-leaf poplars.

Seymour, in his time, has sailed the seven seas and had adventures. He is in his seventies now, a man of the sea and Cape Cod type. He has a white mustache, and blue, sea-going eyes. As we sat in his kitchen smoking our pipes, we could look out across the harbor and the mainland across, and to sea of the east accompanied his tales of the sea, of which this is one.

* * * *

"Do you believe," I asked, "that there was ever such a thing as the white whale Herman Melville wrote about in 'Moby Dick'?"

"Yes sir," answered Seymour emphatically. "I do. My father used to live in Nantucket, and he knew plenty of whalers. One of them was a captain named Melian, and he told my father about a voyage he made to the South Pacific. They saw a white whale, and she sank their vessel. Only two lived to tell the tale, and Captain Melian was one.

The whaler was in the South Pacific, not like Melian from Nantucket. They had lost a man overboard rescuing the Harp, and the old vessel had not poohy well hattered.

The look was looking, some of the crew were sick with scurvy, and they had seen few whales. So far, the voyage was a failure, and they were getting a bit discouraged. She had never been a lucky craft, anyway, had been spared twice, and now in a collision.

One night, the lookout forward, happening to glance aft, thought he saw a man standing near the foremast, with outstretched arms. He called out, but the man made no answer, and did not move. The lookout went over to where he thought the man was standing, but found nothing there.

Retracing to his post, the lookout surely saw the man standing by the mast, and once more he went over to him and found nothing but thin air.

He went back, rubbed his eyes, thinking there might be salt on his eye-strings that made him see the strange image. There it was again, however, and a third time he approached it, with no result except the conviction that he had seen a ghost.

At that moment there was a flash of lightning, accompanied by a loud crash of thunder. Fearing alert, the lookout was startled to see a ball of green fire rapidly circling the totemast. This lasted only an instant; there was no more lightning, and the men came out from behind a ridge.

After that the apparition could not

**HYANNIS THEATRE
HYANNIS**

Two Shows Daily at 7:15 and 9:15—Matinee daily at 2:30, except Sunday

SUN, MON, TUES,
JULY 28-29-30

"BECKY SHARP"
MIRIAM HOPKINS, ALAN HOWBRAY,
BILLIE HUBB

The First Full-length Picture in the New Technicolor

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY,
JULY 31, AUG. 1

"SMART GIRL"
IDA LEVING, KENT TAYLOR

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, AUG. 2-3

"THE MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE"
B. C. FIELDS, MARY HULLY

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**IDLEHOUR THEATRE
HYANNIS**

Two Shows Daily at 7:15 and 9:00—Matinee daily at 2:30 except Sunday

SUNDAY, JULY 28

"HARD ROCK HARRINGTON"
GEORGE GIBBIE, IRENE HERRY

MONDAY, TUESDAY, JULY 29-30

"AFTER THE DANCE"
NANCY CARROLL, GEORGE MURPHY

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, JULY 31, AUG. 1

"RUGGLES OF RED GAP"
CHARLES LACORTON, SAM FITTS
CHARLES HUGGLES, MARY BOLAND

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, AUGUST 2-3

"LOVE ME FOREVER"
GRACE MOORE, LES CARRELLA,
ROBERT ALLEN

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ALLIANCE FORUM 2018



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The capstone of the scrappy Chatham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation's efforts this past year was June 23rd's Forum, "Chatham in the 21st Century: How Does the Town Cope with the 'Unintended Consequences of Popularity'?" The 25 year-old Chatham Alliance is a loose organization of 15 local non-profits sharing a common interest in the preservation and conservation of those aspects of Chatham that make it an attractive place in which to live and visit. The Forum was built upon a provocative editorial by Tim Wood, in the Cape Cod Chronicle last October, titled "The Unintended Consequences of Popularity." During the fall the Alliance solicited from its membership more than a dozen potential forum topics. No one stood out as being of greater relevance than the others. About the same time, and quite independently, Tim published his editorial. At a December meeting the Alliance realized Tim's editorial effectively knit together many of the issues member organization representatives had cited. Tim volunteered to moderate a forum simultaneous with the Steering committee's invitation. The late winter and spring was devoted to recruiting a balanced panel. To my eyes the real coup was bringing Karen Murdoch, President of Women of Fishing Families onto the panel. Too often young working families (many of whose lineages go back generations) are ignored in discussing the issues facing Chatham.

Tim asked the five-member panel three questions:

- 1) What do you see as the most significant unintended consequences of Chatham's popularity? Which can we live with, and which can't we live with?
- 2) In your view are these consequences real or perceived? Is Chatham's popularity happenstance or has it been cultivated?
- 3) Do we expand infrastructure, such as roads, or put up with what we've got, and take the consequences?

Following each question, each of the five members of the Panel responded, together expressing

a broad cross-section of views. The last half hour was given over to a number of provocative questions addressed to the panel from the floor.

My own take on the proceedings is that they were very effective in putting the finger on some big problems, and hinting at ways to their solution. Tour buses at the Lighthouse lookout are a problem, traffic and parking are bigger problems, and affordable year-round housing for the families of those who work in Chatham ("the price of real estate" in Forum parlance), a bigger problem still. I had some disagreement with the panel when it came to placing blame for the present untenable conditions in Chatham. Two institutions came in for searing criticism - the Chamber of Commerce (and indirectly the Merchant's Association), and local government. I am certainly no friend of the former. But they are very effective in doing what they set out to do - enhance the short-term profits of their members. The fact that their means to this end may come at great cost to conservation, preservation, quality of life, and just about everything else in Chatham, is purposely not on their radar. If you want to control what the Chamber does it must be done from the outside - citizen power concentrated through responsive democratic government. That brings me to the latter - Town Government. Yes, Town Government in Chatham could do a much better job of balancing the interests of its various constituencies. But just who is Town Government? Yes, it's the elected officials, who appoint the various boards and administrators. But in the end it's We the People, who elect the officials, and it is We the People who must follow-up to give them spine to implement serious solutions to serious community problems. The squeaky wheel, so to speak, gets the grease. Government belongs to those who use it. If we don't follow up en masse after elections, daily hounding our elected officials with our interests and concerns, special interests will, and do, rule.



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The problems cited at the Forum are but symptoms of a much larger and more difficult problem. Without seriously recognizing and addressing the real problem, dealing with the symptoms is tilting with windmills. Chatham's real problem isn't too many in July, it's too few in February.

It's then that Chatham shows its true self. It's a ghost town. Most retirees have gone off to Florida leaving only a few struggling young families in northwest Chatham, a thin smattering of diehards elsewhere in the town, and a whole lot of empty houses. This is hardly a citizen base sufficient to power a local government tasked with planning for the tsunami of the next July. It takes both a larger population and a more diverse demographic, with a year-round (non-vacationing) perspective, to do that. No wonder special interests rule in Chatham.

This wasn't always so. I am one of a couple dozen year-round residents of Chatham's fabled Old Village. I've lived in my present home year-round nearly 50 years and summered in it for 15 years before that. Over the 65+ years I've known the Old Village I've witnessed a massive and terribly destructive demographic change in Chatham, and especially in the Old Village. Today much of Chatham, especially Chatham east of Stage/Old Harbor Roads, is devoid of young year-round families. 60 years ago the Old Village was a living and active neighborhood. The old homes that have recently been gentrified into luxurious seasonal compounds, back then were homes for 3 generations or more of civically active year-round citizens, just as they had been for generations before. There was a thriving tourist economy as nearly every family took in summer guests and workers to supplement their income. Off season there was a vibrant community, active and concerned about quality of life issues for itself and its children.

I certainly am not such a troglodyte as to advocate a return to 1950's Chatham. However, neither am I willing to sit by and watch the death throes of a Town in which the demographic has shifted from 3 generations in equal balance to an almost entirely elderly demographic, with all the changes in viewpoint, life style, and community involvement that that entails.

There is a viable alternative to the present model for Chatham. It both requires and supports a new balanced demographic. A fantasy? Well maybe. But a Town government given spine by a substantial and diverse year-round population could, for example, work to repurpose over time some of the existing housing stock from seasonal occupancy to year-round to provide real, affordable homes, (not newly built seasonal backyard apartments - "ADUs") in real, living, and vibrant year-round neighborhoods for the people who build and service the enormous private wealth locked up in Chatham's real estate. Currently many of these workers travel great distances to do this work. They are not part of the community of Chatham, but should be - just as they are in other towns. This effort might be underwritten by a meaningful tax surcharge on homes left unoccupied for a several months of the year. Other steps that might raise funds to encourage and support an increase in a more diverse group of year-round residents might be a real estate transfer tax, a high-season living wage of \$75 per hour (pro-rated in the shoulder and off-seasons) to help workers pay the grossly inflated costs of Chatham real estate, \$5 per hour parking on public streets and municipal lots for non-tax-payers, and a substantial water surcharge for high season usage. Creative thinking by groups of concerned citizens could work out details, and come up with many more options to encourage and fund an increase and a

broadening of year-round demographics. Ultimately Infra-structure (fire, water, public safety, parks and recreation, sewer, and parking) has to be provided by the Town for peak usage. Either peak usage needs to be curtailed or design and construction for peak usage needs to be paid for by the peak users, not by seasonal and year-round resident property owners.

It took Chatham 50 years to bring to fruition the current unsustainable model. It could take as long to increase and diversify our functional year-round population to power a local government with sufficient year-round citizen involvement to remake Chatham more for its residents, and less for the wealth manipulators and the hordes of seasonal tourists lured here to feed at Chatham's golden trough.

If the Forum is to be remembered as anything but a lot of hot air, work needs to begin soon to move Chatham in a substantive way to a sustainable model. Big changes, yes - but big problems require big changes. And if what I saw and heard at the Forum is any indication over a hundred citizens stand ready to start.

David MacAdam
OVA Representative to The Chatham Alliance
for Conservation and Preservation

You can read the Chatham Alliance's June Forum Program which includes moderator Tim Wood's editorial here: [Chatham Alliance Forum Program](#)

The Shutters Sail from Chase Cottage to Mermaid Cottage

It isn't often that a dream really does come true. But Cheryl Avery Gardner's story proves that it can, indeed, happen. From the time she was a little girl Cheryl dreamed of living in a house with sailboat shutters. In 1996 she answered an ad offering "old sailboat shutters for sale"—just like the ones she'd daydreamed about on Bank Street Beach near her childhood summer cottage. Her call connected her with the manager of the Chase Cottages who told her there were 21 pairs of old wooden panel shutters with sailboats cut into them - just the right size and with dark Essex Green color! The shutters needed a great deal of scraping, painting and repairing, and the Cottages weren't in a position to do the work.



Picture taken by George Russ, Friday, September 5, 1947.
The former boat house, turned into the Cottage on the Pond.

The Cottage with its sailboat shutters -from "A Cape Cod Legacy - The Story of Avis Augusta Morton Chase" by Antoinette Adam, published 1985

Cheryl, fortunately, is a woman who appreciates such special items. She bought them all, had a handyman do the necessary repairs, and put 18 pairs on her house on Cedar Street. In 2002 she moved to 180 Old Harbor Road and took the extra three pairs of shutters with her. Cheryl brightens when she speaks of this wonderful dream come true. "They are treasured possessions," she says proudly as she gestures to the shutters in place on her Mermaid Cottage. Currently, shutters from Hunter's Pines Cottages have been salvaged and are being restored for Mermaid Cottage. We are so fortunate that there are people like her who value history and save bits of it for us all to enjoy. Thank you, Cheryl.



Mermaid Cottage with its Fleet of Sailboat Shutters - Photo courtesy Nancy Koerner

—Nancy Koerner

Old Village Association Officers 2017-2018

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 2018	Winnie Lear
	Carol Pacun
	Bill Horrocks

Term ending 2019	Debbie Aikman
	Nancy Koerner
	David MacAdam
	Lisa Green

Term ending 2020

Lisa Edge
Nancy Phelps
Jennifer Longworth
George Olmsted

Appointed

Corresponding Secretary: Lisa Edge
Assistant Treasurer: Nancy Phelps

~ Village News ~

Annual Wine + Cheese Gathering at The Porches! Plan to join us **today, Wednesday, July 18, 4pm to 6pm.**

Come enjoy the view from this wonderful porch overlooking the Mill Pond . Have a chance to visit with your neighbors. Please bring a chair. Hostess: Lisa Edge 508-945-0575.

OVA Annual Meeting - Monday, Aug 6, 2018 at the Chatham Beach and Tennis Club - note the earlier date in August!

5:30 PM Refreshments and Conversation

6:15 PM Program and Business Meeting

PROGRAM

Speakers: John Whelan and Kim Roderiques

Author John Whelan and photographer Kim Roderiques will describe their experiences
In creating their wonderful 2017 book entitled "I am of Cape Cod"

Village Kids For Food- Tuesday, August 7th - save the date! As we did last year, volunteers will deliver a food bag to each house in the Old Village. The bag contains a list of food suggestions, a self-addressed envelope for donations and lots of room for food for the Chatham Food Pantry. On Tuesday the 7th, the actual collection day, more volunteers will go door to door to collect the bags and return them to the Village Kids For Food Headquarters at 99 School Street. The wonderful success of this event depends upon the volunteer help we have ... both young and older! Won't you sign up to "cover" your street or nearby neighbors?

To volunteer please call Lisa 617-680-1166, or
Nancy 508-945-1912 nbkoerner@yahoo.com

Atwood House - a full schedule of exciting lectures, events and family fun awaits you this summer, 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**.

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 Summer!
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