



Keeping Our History Alive



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FROM THE EDITOR

This newsletter provides many visual and written examples of thoughtful reflection on our mission, our champions, our architecture and our natural setting. We hope the features and images offer you a chance to reflect on and savor the beauty around us.

Special thanks to Carol Pacun, Joan Horrocks, Kim Longworth, John Whelan and Gloria Freeman; and to Bill Horrocks and Kim for their work in re-designing our founding document, which you can now find on our resources page. We've included Carol's foreword for the founding document in this issue. Newly published, bound, print copies will be available soon - stay tuned for more on this!

Enjoy your summer,
Jennifer Longworth
newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Villagers,

Despite an ominous forecast, the parade happened and featured our very accomplished Villager and 2023 Grand Marshal, John Whelan. The town is teeming with visitors as usual this time of year and the atmosphere is festive despite humid and foggy weather conditions. We hope to see you at the Weber's home (65 Holway St.) July 25th from 4:00 to 6:00 for Wine, Cheese and Conversation. Our annual meeting is scheduled for August 7th at the Chatham Beach and Tennis Club when our guest speaker will be the Executive Director of the Chatham Conservation Foundation, Lauren Arcomano.

I wish everyone a happy and healthy summer season.

Warmly,
Winnie Lear, President
directors@oldvillagechatham.org



Summer moonshine © EJH 2023

Foreword to Our Founding Document

~ Carol Pacun

The Old Village is a jewel in the crown of Cape Cod's historic resources.

- 2001, National Register of Historic Places Registration form for the Old Village Historic District



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To no one's surprise and everyone's relief this 2001 application to place the Old Village on the National Register of Historic Places was approved. After all, for centuries the residents had made it clear that their neighborhood was special: not just a group of houses, but a unique village at the edge of the ocean; home to a Coast Guard station, a lighthouse, a sandy beach, and at one time or another, stores, an elementary school, and a house of worship. Summer folks, including college professors and government workers, happily shared the space with local families and fishermen who occasionally made it clear that outsiders, town officials and voters had no right to tell them what to do. This attitude could and did defeat the one effort at the 1985 town meeting to list the Village as an historic site. The "no one can tell me what color to paint my door" philosophy could and did prevail.

Years later, in 1997, a few "washashores" - Elinor Gelsey, husband Norman (who was chairman of the Chatham Historical Commission) and I - noticed with some alarm a new tendency for homeowners to demolish old, historic houses to make room for more modern structures. This activity would radically change the Old Village. Not knowing exactly what to do, they planned an informal meeting outside, with refreshments of course, to talk about the issue. On that afternoon, in blinding sunshine and with no microphone, a larger than expected group got to business. A unanimous vote directed us to form an Old Village Association with elected officers who would save the neighborhood.

In a few weeks, an official Old Village Association board of directors went to work. After studying various choices (explained in newsletters, meetings and home visits) the directors decided the best choice would be for the Old Village to apply to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, where the emphasis would be on protecting structures deemed to be historic from demolition and monitoring extensive changes. The past had taught us that our residents required and deserved to know every detail of how a National Register worked. Nancy Yeaw and the Chatham Historical Commission joined the effort, along with too many volunteers to mention, but it still took two often burdensome years to finish the job. When the Old Village homeowners voted, only three people objected to the listing - the color of doors was never mentioned.

We in the Old Village should continue to be proud of our historic homes protected by this document. However, we should also take a minute to think about the tree-lined streetscape, the small sheds that sit in backyards, the often unpaved roadways that may lead to yet another house hidden from the street, and the glimpses of the water beyond. These are the remaining reminders of the simple life our ancestors lived, and their devotion to their neighborhood. Now that neighborhood is ours to preserve.

June 2023

Wine, Cheese and Conversation

Join us on Merritt and Jay Weber's beautiful lawn

65 Holway Street in the Old Village

Tuesday July 25th, 4 - 6pm

Please bring a chair if you'd like to sit

looking forward to seeing you there!

Lisa Edge 856.795.3286 and Lisa Green 617.680.1166

rain date Wednesday, July 26th 4 - 6pm

Reflecting on *Why Old Places Matter*

~ Kim Longworth

My family lives in the former Village School in Chatham's Old Village. The elementary school closed in 1925; the building was eventually acquired by the American Legion and was used for dances on Saturday nights. Occasionally, a contractor or neighbor will come to the house and tell me about attending those dances in their youth. I like living in a building that has touched so many lives in the local community.

The book *Old Places Matter*, by Thompson Mayes (Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), explores our relationship with historic buildings like ours, along with streets, gardens, battlefields, and other cherished places. The book's subtitle, *How historic places affect our identity and well-being*, gets to the heart of the matter. Although the case for preservation is often based on economic factors (tourism income, for example), Mayes highlights other equally important reasons why old places are good for people.

Mayes is Vice President and Senior Counsel for the National Trust, an organization that supports the preservation of America's historic buildings, neighborhoods, and heritage. His book explores the reasons old places are significant to us, from the personal to the civic, and the sacred to the aesthetic. It is largely a compilation of essays based on interviews with people that study our relationship to place: preservationists, geographers, architects, environmentalists, and psychologists. He also shares insights from his conversations with "a larger world of people" who care about old places.

Three reasons why old places are good for people stand out. The first is that they create a sense of continuity: old places give people "the sense of stability they need in the ever-changing world." The second is that they help us remember: old places "are like memories you can touch." The third is that they embody our identity: old places "tell us who we are as a people." These reasons are intertwined in our psyche, and they depend on and reinforce each other.

Mayes makes the common argument that preservation of old places is good for the local economy, because restoration of attractive old buildings raises property values and promotes tourism. But he also cites evidence that repurposing old buildings can be more sustainable than constructing new buildings. Demolition creates waste and takes energy, and features of historic architecture, such as transom windows or wide wood floorboards, are desirable but expensive to build new. He makes a case that local planners and historic commissions should prioritize repurposing, and only use demolition as a last resort. Chatham has many examples of successful repurposing: former homes have become 21st century businesses, and former businesses have become homes. Repurposing is the story of the Village School – first an elementary school, then an American Legion gathering place, then an artist's studio and

residence, and now our vacation home.

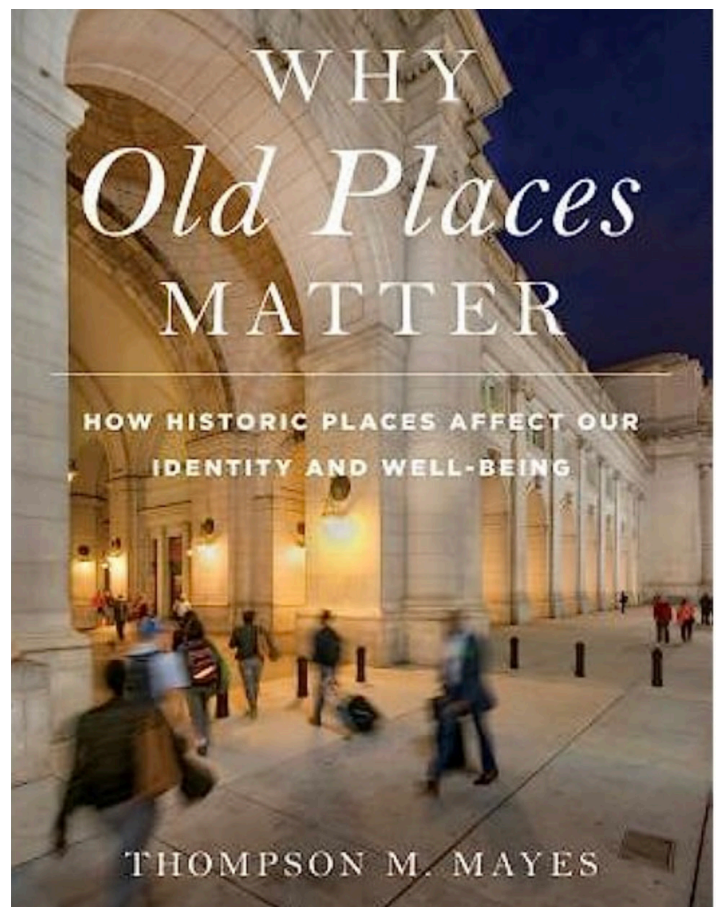
Mayes asks us to think expansively about what is worth preserving, even if it is not considered historically old. In Chatham's Old Village, consider the footbridge put up by neighbors on the east side of Little Mill Pond. Residents and tourists alike use that bridge. My kids, now in their late teens, grew up taking that bridge as a short-cut into town for a trip to the library or the candy store. For them, it is an "old place"; they expect it to always be there.

People don't have to grow up, or even live, in a place to identify with it or to feel that it improves their quality of life. Mayes discusses the creative inspiration artists find in old places, and how people often gain spiritual strength from the sacred places of their distant ancestors. He also reminds us that the best history lessons are those where students are physically in the spaces where history happened.

Why Old Places Matter is a thoughtful testament to the vital role old places play in our lives and in our sense of self. Thompson Mayes puts into words what many of us feel intuitively. By articulating what we feel to be true, he provides language that everyone who works to preserve old places can use to explain why those places are important. The book is both an inspiration and a point of departure for discussion among preservationists - both professional and amateur - about what matters to them and why they do what they do.

Where to find the book: As of July 2023, Yellow Umbrella Books can order this book; Where the Sidewalk Ends cannot.

It can also be ordered online from Alibris.com or Bookshop.org, both independent online bookstores, and from Amazon.com, including a Kindle version.



Where You Want to Be

~ John Whelan

The Chatham Chamber of Commerce now uses as its slogan *Chatham: It's Where You Want To Be*. Their glossy new booklet is available throughout Chatham including the information booth on Main Street and is chock full of interesting facts about Chatham and its many points of interest. Every local real estate office has an advertisement in it as do most of the stores in town. Of greater interest to me was the listing of things to do in Chatham. The Chatham Historical Society is celebrating its 100th year anniversary in this year. The Atwood House, the home of Captain Joseph Atwood, was built in 1752 and was considered a mansion at the time of construction. The original rooms are intact and offer the visitor an authentic view of life in Chatham over 250 years ago.

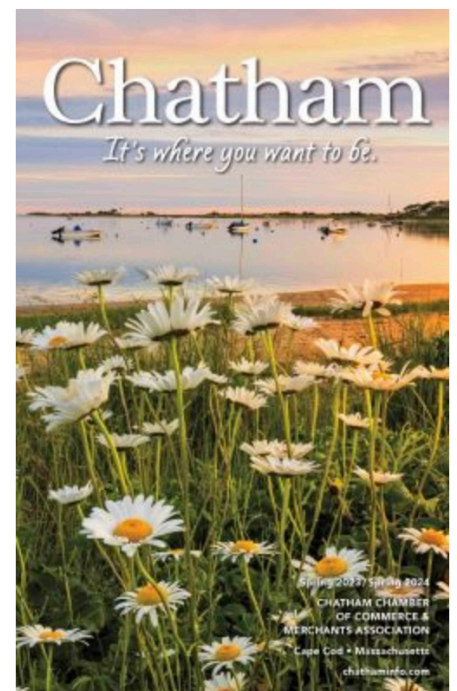
The Atwood House Museum has grown up around the old house. The Murals Barn is my favorite, in that I remember some of the Chatham folk that Alice Stalknecht used as models. The murals are historic and controversial. A tour of the Atwood House and the Murals Barn should top your “rainy day” list particularly this centennial year.

Another rainy day idea is The Chatham Marconi Maritime Center, which keeps getting better and better. This year, it features a wonderful new exhibit about the Ocean Liner Era. Chatham Marine Radio was instrumental in establishing communication with ships at sea, so the exhibit is totally appropriate.

The Village, our village, isn't mentioned, but, in my mind, it too is an attraction. The beautiful older homes, concentrated together, give a hint of what America used to look like in a kinder, more peaceful era.

The semi-annual magazine, *Chatham Living by the Sea*, shows Chatham in a more glamorous light. The featured homes are large, expensive and beautiful. The ads are upscale. A uninitiated reader might have difficulty distinguishing Chatham from Nantucket. With all the new construction in town, it does feel like Chatham is, in fact, starting to resemble Nantucket in certain areas. Home prices have appreciated to a new high level and year-round rentals are scarce.

Jimmy Buffett once wrote a song with the lyrics “the weather is here, wish you were beautiful.” I'm hoping our weather gets better and allows us a few warm beach days, but no matter what, Chatham is beautiful.



Remembering Norman Pacun ~ Gloria Freeman

Norm Pacun, despite a warm and friendly manner and generosity of spirit, was a crusader in a holy war – the war to protect and preserve Chatham’s heritage and quality of life. *The Cape Cod Chronicle* dubbed him a “tenacious advocate for preservation”, and for that characteristic – and his courage - we should all be grateful. Without Norm, the Old Village and Chatham would be quite different.

Norm, along with his wife Carol, were the leaders in establishing the Old Village National Register District. While others made extensive contributions to the nomination of the Old Village for this honor, it was Norm who pulled it all together so that it was -- and is -- a complete, accurate, interesting history of the historic and architecturally significant village. He and Carol also formed the Old Village Association and the Chatham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation. Norm was willing to take some degree of pride for these achievements, as well as for his stints as long-time chair of the Historical Commission, president of the Conservation Foundation, Chatham Beach and Tennis Club president, and serving in various offices at the Chatham Historical Society, including membership on its Board of Trustees. He also took deep pleasure in heading the successful purchase of Andrew Hardings Lane Beach by the Town, and, perhaps especially, for his days as a call fire fighter.



photo courtesy Alan Pollock, Cape Cod Chronicle

He did not talk much about his past achievements. It was always about what there is to do today and tomorrow. The challenges still to be met. He was indefatigable. There seemed to be no end to his energy and optimism, making everything seem possible. While there was great diversity in his endeavors, there was a single-mindedness and unity as well. He had vision, matched with desire, commitment, and ability, to put it all into action.

Norm wrote the Community Vision Statement of Chatham's Long Range Comprehensive Plan unanimously adopted by Town Meeting in 2003. He described the Plan as "an effort to preserve the very best of Chatham" and said that "The more Chatham has changed, the more its people have tried to retain their links to the past and to their unique surroundings." For most of us that remains true, in our efforts not to leave to chance the things that we value in our town.

He was at the helm of the Historical Commission when the Demolition Delay Bylaw was enacted; he wrote the Outside Display bylaw; helped craft the legislation that created the Historic Business District; was deeply involved in the establishment of the Community Preservation Act; crafted numerous amendments to Chatham's Protective (Zoning) Bylaw, including the Formula Business Establishments amendment; and spoke frequently at Town Meetings to support regulations to protect and preserve the town, or oppose those not in its best interest. Among dozens of other achievements, he contributed to protections for Water and Sewer Rules and Regulations and all that which governed the impact of sewerage on growth and development.

And then there was the Mitchell River Bridge, the last working timber bridge in the entire country, destined to be demolished and rebuilt as a modern steel and concrete structure. Norm was not deterred by the enormity of the task to protect its historical significance. He jumped right in and matched any obstacle the foolhardy put in his path. Only after years of tireless research and heroic effort did Norm learn that the Keeper of the U.S. National Register of Historic Places declared the Bridge eligible for listing on the Register. Carol and Norm were in Turkey with friends when the Keeper's decision was forwarded to them. It was 9 a.m., and they were having breakfast. After a few tears, a bottle of champagne was opened to toast, not Norm, not the Friends of the Mitchell River Bridge, but the Bridge itself - a now-confirmed continuous part of Chatham for over 150 years. The Keeper's action forced the State to look for ways to preserve the Bridge as an historic asset. Norm had stepped forward to be the Bridge's guardian, and, in his own way, its keeper.

He was ever watchful of the agendas of the many Town boards and commissions and was always willing to take an active part in public debate to defend the preservation of what continues to be the Old Village's architectural heritage, so that it would not be lost forever.

Norm had a deep understanding of the need to revise land use laws so that towns could have greater control over how they plan for the future and not be subverted through excessive grandfathering and the lack of consistency between local master plans and zoning. The loopholes were large, but Norm was committed to maintaining human scale, historic character, and quality of life and said so directly with eloquence, passion, and often, success. Town officials might not listen, but Town Meeting did.

The question most asked of me has been what manner of man he was besides being a pretty serious, lawyerly type. How to answer that - because what gets left out of an account like this is most of a life.

There was a sense of life and enjoyment of the simplest things. Norm loved, besides his family and the Old Village and Chatham, playing tennis and later croquet; oystering, clamming, and fishing; his vegetable garden; his little red boat; The New York Times; and Grafton, Vermont. He had an acute intelligence, a sense of pure fun, and no hint of self-consciousness. He was challenging, exhorting, and inspiring. Although he never talked about it, word got around that he was generous in giving his time and expertise to many townspeople. Those of us who shared in his work and friendship were so, so lucky and will never forget him.

Norm was part of our landscape, and perhaps we took him for granted – that he'd always be there to step forward, responsive and caring. Now the Village seems empty.

June 25, 2023



Reflections at Breathwood 2022 © EJH 2023

Old Village Association Officers 2022-2023

President: Winnie Lear
Vice President: Debbie Aikman
Treasurer: Nancy Koerner
Clerk: Carol Pacun

Term ending 2023

Nancy Phelps
Jennifer Longworth
Lisa Edge
Kim Longworth

Term ending 2024

Winnie Lear
Carol Pacun
Bill Horrocks

Term ending 2025

Debbie Aikman
Nancy Koerner
David MacAdam
Lisa Green

Village News



OLD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, August 7th at the Chatham Beach and Tennis Club
5:30 pm Refreshments and Conversation
6:15 pm Program and Business Meeting

PROGRAM

Speaker: Lauren R. Arcomano, Executive Director, Chatham Conservation Foundation
Chatham Conservation Foundation: Past, Present and Future

BUSINESS

In accordance with the Old Village Association, Inc. by-laws, the Nominating Committee voted to place in nomination the following officers and directors.

OFFICERS (one-year terms)

President, Winifred Lear; Vice President, Deborah Aikman;
Treasurer, Nancy Koerner; Clerk, Lisa Green

DIRECTORS

three-year term ending 2026: Jennifer Longworth, Lisa Edge, Kim Longworth, Greg Horne
three-year term ending 2025: Fred Miller (serving two years)
Other Directors: Bill Horrocks, Carol Pacun



OVA member Amy Dare Middleton with her stunning Old Village Whale at the Art In The Park Meet the Artists event in Kate Gould Park. This year's Whale features Hazel's shanty and a mouthwateringly colorful clambake!

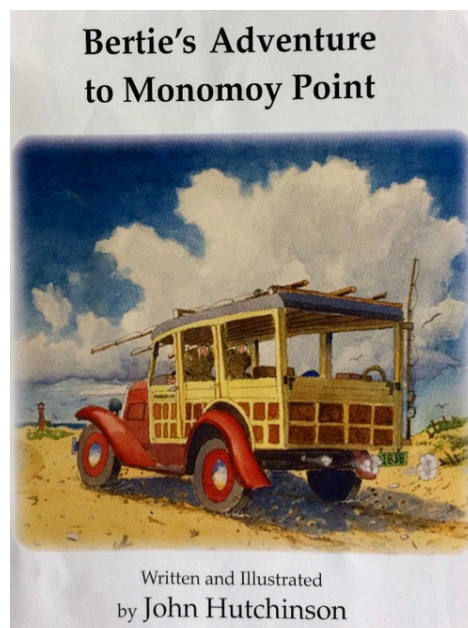
Bid online through August 18th at chathaminfo.com!

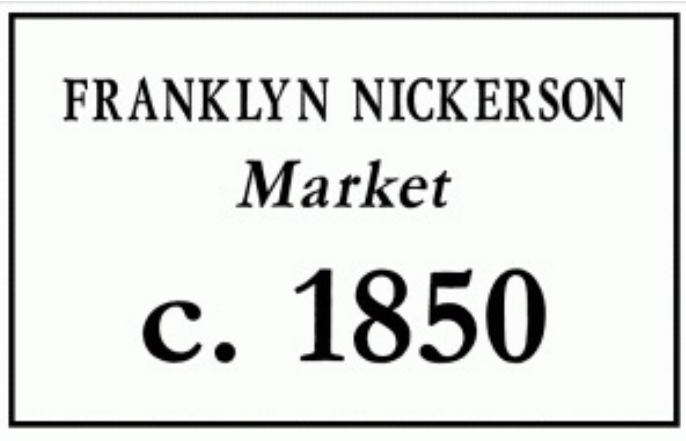
We invite all Old Village residents and visitors to join the Chatham Walkers, motto: "For fun and fitness", for 2-3 mile walks starting at 7am at the Oyster Pond bathing beach parking area Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. All ages and walking rates are welcome!



Have you or has someone you know published a book or produced a film about the Old Village, Chatham or Cape Cod?

Please send us title(s), image, author/director name, publisher and date, and where to find the book/film locally and online.





Chatham Historic House Signs

Houses 100 years or older are eligible for white rectangular signs that highlight the early history of the building, e.g.

Name of first owner
Function of building
Year built

Over 670 Chatham houses are eligible for these signs; over 100 are in the Old Village. The information and application are available by clicking [here](#). For street designations in the Old Village visit our webpage.

Become an OV member! Sign up [here](#).

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Your email will be used only for OVA communications. We welcome newsletter contributors as well!



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HAPPY SUMMER!

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