

MEMORY DAYS SCHEDULED

Our fourth Memory Day will be held in West Dennis on Sunday, April 29, at 3 P.M. at West Dennis Community Building. All are welcome. We will have our final South Dennis Memory Day on Sunday, May 20, at 3 P.M. at the Senior Citizen's Center. All who have participated in this series have urged us to carry on with this next year, and the Board is considering another round, village by village. We invite your comment.

THE HISTORY AND THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CAPE COD

Robert Barlow believes that there is no place in the world where natural environment and social history are so closely intertwined as here on Cape Cod. That's why his course on the Cape's history deals in depth with the geology, ecology and natural environment of the area, and how these factors have affected the social development of this sandy peninsula. If you would like to learn of these two aspects of the Cape's past and present, why not join those who are taking Mr. Barlow's course, which is being sponsored by the D.H.S. The classes will be held at the Senior Citizen's Center on Thursdays, beginning May 10 through June 7, at 7:30, with a weekend field trip each week, for leisurely strolls over easily traversed areas which will help to illustrate the previous lecture. The cost is \$12 per person, or \$20 for a couple. Call Mr. Barlow, 398-7600, or send a postcard with your name and phone number to 'History Course', P.O. Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660. Note change of beginning date and place.

CUP PLATES SALES

We are completely sold out of amber and teal and have very few clear plates available. They will be on sale at the Town Hall the last week in April, at Memory Day in West Dennis April 29th, and then at Josh and Elinor Crowell's, Whig Street, Dennis, call 385-3689. The cup plate venture was so successful that the Board is presently considering a second cup plate in another year or two. We will be happy to hear from anyone who will be willing to help.

WORDEN REUNION

Scheduled for Sept. 15 and 16, a family reunion will bring descendants of Peter Worden back to visit ancestral lands. Wordens of that name no longer live in Dennis, although many Dennis families have Worden blood by virtue of a female ancestor. Fourth generation male Wordens sold their ancient grants and moved to Rhode Island and points west, no doubt in search of more fertile land. I know of another reunion of a Dennis resident with a descendant of Peter Worden, not in Dennis on a pleasant Fall weekend, but in New York, at a time of high excitement and crisis. It was March, 1862. Civil war was raging in the South. The Northern strategists were trying desperately to make a dramatic move which would bring the war to a swift conclusion. The chance came when news that the C.S.S. Virginia, formerly the U.S.S. Merrimac, was steaming towards Hampton Roads. At New York, the new Union iron clad U.S.S. Monitor was at last ready to enter the fray, and the crew rejoiced at the opportunity to face the iron clad southern foe. In command of the Monitor, as she lumbered out of Long Island Sound and along the coast to Hampton Roads, was Lt. John L. Worden. And onboard the pilot boat responsible for getting the Monitor there safely was Capt. Frederick Nickerson of South Dennis. I presume they must have had a chance to talk with each other, and perhaps they shared the knowledge that, generations before, their first American ancestors were pioneers together in the same small town on Cape Cod. It is a strange coincidence, one which these two men could not have even conjectured about, that a part of the grants to each of their ancestors is being considered at town meeting, 1984, to become town property almost 350 years later.

BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON - 1984

We are very fortunate this year to be able to schedule our town's Birthday Celebration on June 17th at Lighthouse Inn, West Dennis, where, as Jean Taylor says, the view of the sound is the "best show in town." But I must say, the menu sounds good, too - Cup of Chowder, choice of Chicken Salad with Fruit or Seafood Quiche, with Tossed Salad, Birthday Cake, Coffee, Tea or Milk, price per person \$8. We will be entertained with nostalgic show tunes and there will be a trivia quiz and door prizes, and, always, good company. For reservations, send check and self-addressed envelope to Joshua Crowell, P.O. Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638. And please note, because we have to guarantee a certain number, we cannot refund your money if you have to cancel, but if you can let us know early enough, we will try to resell your tickets.

IT'S BIKE TOUR TIME AGAIN

Bill and Isabelle Flynn and Jim and Helen Wicks are planning a bicycle tour of Dennis Port on Saturday, May 12, beginning at 10 A.M. in the Sea Street Beach parking area. You will discover some interesting facts about our Southeast village, and see first hand why an historic district has been suggested for the area. If you do not bicycle, you are welcome to follow our route in your car. Rain date Sunday, May 13, at 2 P.M.

CALENDAR

- April 29 3 P.M. West Dennis Memory Day, West Dennis Community Building
May 7 Town Elections
May 8 7 P.M. Annual Town Meeting, Wixon School. This is the 345th year of government by town meeting. Don't miss it.
May 10 7:30 P.M. Senior Citizen's Center. First class, History and Natural History of Cape Cod. See article for details.
May 10 and 11 Nantucket. Cape and Islands Association of Historical Associations meeting.
May 15 D.H.S. Board meeting, home of Nancy Reid.
May 12 Bike Tour of Dennis Port. Meet at Sea Street Beach parking area, 10 A.M. Rain date, Sunday, May 13 at 2.
June 2 Lady Slipper Walk. Meet at Town Hall parking lot, 10 A.M.
June 17 Birthday Luncheon, Lighthouse Inn.

Also of interest to our members

- April 30 Daffodil Day on Nantucket
June 3-6 Tall Ships in Boston Harbor. Call Paula, 394-5739.

MAY IS NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH.

Channel 58 has scheduled programs on Historic Preservation, not only of buildings, but of antiques, documents and other things. Tune in to Good Morning, Cape Cod at 9 A.M. on May 1 and 2. Nancy Reid will be among several people to be interviewed.

LADY SLIPPER WALK

Last year, our lady slipper walk was held under what might be termed adverse weather conditions. We hope to fare better this year, as we walk the Indian Lands Conservation Area with botanist Dr. N.H. Nickerson, Jr. of Tufts University, on June 2nd at 10 A.M. We have a botanical treasure on this conservation peninsula, and if you enjoy a pleasant morning walk, join us in the Town Hall parking lot. You will also hear some history of the Indian Lands, and also the progress of an archaeological survey of the adjacent Nickerson property.

SOME INDIAN HISTORY RECOVERED

In addition to the purchase of the Worden land (now known as the Whitfield Johnson property), Town Meeting will consider taking an option to buy another large and historically interesting piece of land. It is the Nickerson property on Bass River, a 23+ acre piece of uplands and wetlands just north of the present Indian Land Conservation Area. It is possible that it is part of Nicholas Nickerson's original grant from the proprietors in 1674. There is an ancient cellar hole on the property which Pauline Derick can document as far back as 1740, and it may be earlier. It was at one time the home of Shubael Nickerson, an ancestor of Frederick in the above article. The land is also the site of the first bridge to span Bass River. Built in 1817, it was a toll bridge to foot traffic, horses, animals and carts. The only free passage was to men going to military training, or for those going to public worship. The most exciting interest, however, from an historical point of view, is that the area is rich in Indian history. Indians lived on both sides of the river, which experts believe was a fresh water stream before the sea level rose. This area shows indications of having been a permanent village for some generations. Under the sponsorship of the Dennis Historical Commission, professional archaeologists are at present surveying the land, through the courtesy of the present owner. The surveyors are excited by some of their early findings and hope that the mapping and documentation of the layers of civilization they uncover will shed some light on the lifestyle of the natives of this place. You are asked NOT to walk out on the site; Conservation Officers and the police will be alert to protect the owner's rights. However, later, we will get permission for a guided group tour of the survey site, so that you may see the excavations first hand.

AN OLD CAPE COD WEATHER COMMENT

"A cold May is kindly and fills the barn finely".
Watch the oak leaves, and don't plant your corn or beans until they are as big as a mouse's ear.

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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