



PORTSMOUTH

Historical Society

March 2018 Newsletter

Spring is on its way and the Portsmouth Historical Society is gearing up for a very busy year. We have quite a few activities planned and we hope that we will have a robust attendance at all of them. Please come and bring all your friends. We are anxious to increase our memberships beyond the 450 that we now have. (We had 85 two years ago!)

The first major upcoming event will be our **Founders' Day** celebration on **Wednesday 7 March**. Our **ORIGINAL Town Compact from 1638** will be on display at the Town Hall from **11 AM till 1 PM**. This is a special appearance of this VERY important document, a crucial part of our Town's founding. I will offer a few remarks about the Compact's origin (and Portsmouth's origin) at 1130. So please come to see this great archive, normally housed in the RI State Archives, for its annual appearance at our Founders' Day celebration. The day marks the 380th anniversary of our town and it is a very special day for both the town and the Portsmouth Historical Society.

It is **PORTSMOUTH HISTORY TRIVIA** time again! Last year we started a program of having two Trivia Programs this time of year. The first will be on **Thursday, 22 March from 6-8 PM**, where the Middle School teams will attempt to defend their title won last year. Teams from both the Middle School and the High School will compete for the first place plaque at the **Gulfstream Grille** at Melville. Please encourage the students in your families to get a team together for this contest.

And on **11 April** we will have a Portsmouth History Trivia Contest for adults at the **Valley Inn from 6-8 PM**. Get a team of 2-5 together and come have fun, while learning a bit about Portsmouth's wonderful history there.

And then please join us for the premier gathering of the **Portsmouth History Book Club** at the Library from 630-730 on **Monday 23 April**. Sponsored by the Historical Society and the Portsmouth Free Public Library, the first book to be discussed is "**American Jezebel**" by **Eve LaPlante**. This is a partial biography of Anne Hutchinson, a major founder of Portsmouth. Seating is limited and registration with the library is required. We hope to continue the Book Club regularly in the future.

Museum Renovation: Thanks to grants from the RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, the 1772 Foundation and our Society's resources, the painting of the Society's museum has been completed! The outside, the first floor Museum and the foyer have all received a new coat of paint. It was a great project carried out by the Preservation Co-op, based in Warren. We are very grateful to all, especially our donors, for their support.

Our archives that have been stored in a POD are now back in the Museum and our curators, led by Nancy Crawford, are busily cleaning display cases and setting up archival displays. We are also finding a few items we did not know we had. So when the museum opens this spring, visitors will not only see a new floor plan but many new items on display as well.

Along those lines we are considering extending our museum hours in the spring and we therefore are searching for additional **Docents** to greet visitors. We will have a Docent-training session in mid-May and we encourage anyone interested in Portsmouth history to volunteer. Expertise is not required; only historical curiosity. Experienced Docents are always on duty to help new volunteers. Let us know if you would like to help.

Also, last month we appealed to **furniture-repair workers** to help us repair and clean up some of our furniture. We got several responses and we still are looking for more. We hope to have a committee ready to go to work in the next few weeks. Again, just let us know through our website if you can help.

We had a full-house (over 70 people) at the Library for **Christian McBurney's talk** on the **Battle of Rhode Island** on 12 February. We know a number were put on a waiting list so we have asked him to come back in late August or early September to repeat his lecture. Look for time and date in succeeding newsletters.

Please accept our thanks if you have renewed your membership recently. Our membership year runs from 1 June to 31 May and we have been catching up with 2017-2018 membership renewals. Both Gary Gump and Rich Talipsky have been actively sending out reminders. Our membership rates are very reasonable and have not changed for a number of years. So, if you have received a notice recently, won't you please consider renewing? We rely on our membership dues, corporate memberships and donations to carry out the wonderful programs we have to celebrate the exciting history of Portsmouth. It is quite unique and we are very proud to call this town our home.

Thanks for your support! See you at our upcoming events!
Jim Garman
President

TAKING PRIDE IN PORTSMOUTH'S HISTORY