

# DOVER TIDINGS

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Editor

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[www.doverhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.doverhistoricalsociety.org)

## *A Message from the President...*

As President of The Dover Historical Society it gives me great pleasure to announce the recent discovery and safe return of Dover's Boston Post Cane, discovered in an antique shop by Dr. Stephen Kruskall, a member of our Advisory Board.

The story of the Boston Post Canes began in August of 1909 when Edwin A. Grozier, publisher of the Boston Post, hired J. F. Fradley & Co. of New York to produce them for presentation to the Selectmen in 700 towns throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island. The canes were to be awarded by the Selectmen to the oldest male registered voter in each community. While in the possession of that most senior citizen it was to remain the property of the town and, upon his death it was to be passed to his successor. In 1930 the tradition was amended to make women eligible as well. It was, of course, an elaborate publicity stunt meant to boost newspaper sales, but the canes were hardly cheap. Constructed of African ebony with an elaborate 14 karat gold head, each cane bore the inscription "Presented by the Boston Post to the Oldest Citizen of \_\_\_\_ - To Be Transmitted".

Dover's Post Cane was first awarded to Deacon Asa Talbot of Farm Street, a dairy farmer, cabinet maker, and nine term Selectman born in Sharon on April 15, 1816. Deacon Talbot died in Dover on October 21, 1910 in his 94th year. Sadly, a search of municipal records has failed to reveal the individual to whom the cane was subsequently transmitted. It is known to have been in the family of George C. Taylor of Taylor Lane, born in Dover in 1858 and thus of an age to receive it in the late 1930's or early 1940's. Readers with any knowledge of the cane's history or prior recipients are urged to contact the Society.



The tradition of the Boston Post Cane is very much alive among those communities so fortunate as to have retained them. It is our hope to place Dover's cane on display, either at the Town Hall or in the Sawin Museum, and to revive the tradition. We are grateful to Dr. Kruskall for his discovery of this long lost piece of Dover's history, and we hope that our friends and readers will continue to keep an eye out for items of historical interest.

*Elisha Lee*  
President

# Caryl House

The Caryl House, 107 Dedham Street, will be open each Saturday afternoon from 1 to 4 PM beginning April 4 and continuing through June 27th with the Annual Garden Party scheduled for Sunday, June 7, from 2 to 4 PM.

In late May or early June, Patty Howe and Priscilla Jones will welcome Chickering School second grade pupils to the Caryl House for the spring session of the education program designed for them. The full house tour, information about its history and the families who lived in it until 1898, and how after the death of Ellen Miller, the house and its acreage were preserved and protected because of the interest of a friend of the family, George Ellis Chickering, speak to its importance as part of Dover's visible history and why it is valuable and recognized as a National Register building.

The beautiful conservation of Sarah Messenger Kollock Caryl's pocket by Deirdre Windsor has been completed and it is now on display in the Caryl House Parlor. An examination of this personal artifact reveals something of its maker and owner. Although a very common item of simple design and construction, it was made with care and pride of workmanship. Similar care and interest in needlework are evident in the pocketbook which Sarah made for her husband, Reverend Benjamin Caryl, in which was found a set of principles written on a small piece of paper. Apparently it was not unusual for people to carry items of this type with them as they went about their daily lives. Another example is "A Decalogue of Canons", or the ten rules to live by that Thomas Jefferson probably learned from his father, Peter. The flame stitch pocketbook, well over 200 years old and one of the few personal items belonging to Benjamin in the collection, is in fragile condition and requires expert professional conservation to ensure that it will be available in future years. Sarah's pocket and Benjamin pocketbook, his handwritten sermons, their books, the papers of their son and Dover's first physician, George, the design, construction and decoration of their home help us to learn who this family was, the level of education of individual members and their interests as well as to provide us with a glimpse of how they may have lived in their home and in the larger community. The cost to conserve the Reverend Caryl's pocketbook is \$950. The Dover Historical Society invites your interest in the preservation of this important piece of Dover's history and your support of, at any level, its conservation.

All the Saturday openings, the special events, the gardens and their maintenance, the programs and projects are made possible by the dedication and support of the public and the active participation of an outstanding group of volunteers.

Barbara Palmer has accepted the position of Curator of the Caryl House and it is with great pleasure that we welcome her.

*Dorothy Boylan*

# Fisher Barn

What is that funny looking tool? What was it used for? How did it end up in the Fisher Barn?

We decided the best way to answer these questions was to catalog all the tools and other artifacts onto the Historical Society's computer. We used a module from our Past Perfect museum software suite. Now the docents can answer all of these questions easily.

Each item had already been marked with a unique identification number. The next step was to photograph each item, type a description into the computer, and finally scan the photograph into the computer to appear with the description. These tasks were accomplished over the past two years and declared complete last fall. A hard copy of the results resides in a loose-leaf notebook available in the Barn for reference by the docent and visitors.

Is this inventory truly complete? No, because artifacts continually arrive at the doorstep of the barn or are transferred in from the Caryl House or the Sawin Museum. So, the catalog must be continually maintained even though the majority of the work is done.

Out thanks go out to Dave Stapleton for doing all of the photography and to Betty Brady and Bob Kelleher who inputted much of the information into the computer's database. A job well done!

Next time you visit the Barn, please take time to peruse its inventory notebook and learn more about some of these artifacts.

*Jack Hoehlein*  
Fisher Barn Curator

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# Sawin Museum

I have just taken over the reins from Glenda Mattes, after her years of service at Sawin, and would like to thank her for the assistance she gave to me, as well as the work she has done over the years, all of which makes my job easier now. In starting anew, there are many ideas and suggestions that have been put forth. I would like to initially target implementation of some of these projects, a few of which have been proposed or discussed in the past, and a few that are new.....

First, the late Dick Vara had some ideas that I found most engaging in considering future developments for the Sawin Museum. One, that he felt strongly about, was that our collection of assorted kitchen and household equipment would best be presented in a "replica of an old farmhouse kitchen". He proposed that we use authentic materials so that the total exhibit would provide a lifelike representation of a turn of the century kitchen (1900 not 2000!).

I think that children visiting our museum would be interested in seeing what a working kitchen looked like a hundred, or so, years ago, with objects staged for function, not just lined up on a shelf.... No ice machines, garbage disposals, microwaves, or convection ovens back then...He felt we should attempt to obtain such items as a sideboard, dry sink, hand pump, and a wall hung phone. I might add that it would, also, obviously, require an old kitchen table and chairs. Perhaps, a pie cabinet, and /or some sort of hutch or shelving, in which to place our collection of equipment and materials, could be located. Old lanterns or oil lamps for lighting, old cider jugs, muddy boots, canning supplies, etc, would flesh out the exhibit further. If anyone has anything that would complement this idea, or if you come across such items, please keep this wonderful idea of Dick's in mind. Call us. We will gladly go out to ascertain if your find meets space and period criteria.

I, personally, would like to develop some other exhibits that will engage the children in town. In today's highspeed world there is little connection with our local history, and many citizens, young and old, drive by day after day without knowing what treasures are within our walls. To that end, I am putting out a call to anyone who has, and would like to loan us (temporarily, at least, due to space constraints), older dollhouses. We have two that are quite old and I would like to develop an exhibit showing the progress in them over the years. Old toys, in general, can, also, be very interesting in this world of computer games and virtual reality, as their simplicity is almost stunning to children nowadays. We have a few toys, but we are always willing to discuss, or look at, any possible additions to our collection.

One of my pet projects involves documenting the few remaining barns in Dover, and their histories, as their numbers have been so diminished over recent years. If you have an old barn, please contact us (Sawin- 785-1832) to arrange for us to photograph it and to document the historical aspects of the building for a future exhibit. If you have pictures of an old barn, no longer with us, please let us know so we can check to see if we already have documentation of it.

I would, also, like to be able to present more extensive exhibits honoring our local veterans. We have some wonderful Revolutionary War, Civil War, WWI and WWII artifacts, and would always consider more. However, if you are a veteran, or have items related to the service of a Dover citizen in some of the frequently overlooked, but, yet still historical events pertaining to actions in the Spanish American War, Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Granada, Panama, Desert Storm, Iraq or Afghanistan, please keep in mind that we are here and would like to discuss them with you in the hope that we may better honor your service for our town and our country.

We invite you to stop by to learn about the history of the streets you drive along and the properties and people you pass by. We might even be able to provide you with information about your own property. Or, perhaps, you might provide us with some fascinating information...let's share our historical wealth.

*Fay Bacher*

Sawin Museum Curator

# Spring 2009 Docent Schedule

## Saturdays 1-4 PM

### CARYL HOUSE

April 4 Dorothy Boylan

April 11 Louise Crane

April 18 Barbara Palmer

April 25 Nancy Ferguson

May 2 Jane Moore

May 9 Sue Knowles

May 16 Louise Crane

May 23 Richard Eels

May 30 Bev Ryburn

June 6 Sara Jo Marble

June 13 Priscilla Jones

June 20 Dale Cabot

June 27 Bev Ryburn

### FISHER BARN

Jack Hoehlein

Bob Bond

Bob Kelleher

Jack Hoehlein

Betty Brady

Priscilla Jones

Bob Kelleher

Bob Bond

Jack Hoehlein

Jack Hoehlein

Jack Hoehlein

Bob Kelleher

Jack Hoehlein

### SAWIN MUSEUM

Shirley McGill

Patty Howe

Fay Bacher

Gerry Wise

Nan Leonard

Clare Burke

Patty Howe

Ursula Gray

Fay Bacher

Fay Bacher

Shirley McGill

Priscilla Jones

Richard Eels

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## *Mark Your Calendar*

You are invited to attend the Caryl House Garden Party on Sunday, June 7th from 2 to 4 PM at the Caryl House. Period refreshments will be served.

There will be open houses at Caryl House and Fisher Barn, 107 Dedham Street, and the Sawin Museum, 80 Dedham St., from 1 to 4 PM on Saturdays from April 4th through June 27th. All those interested in Dover's history are invited.

The 8th Annual Old Home Day Celebration will take place on Sunday, Oct. 4th, 2009. Applications are now being accepted for the Craft Fair and Car Show. For information on Old Home Day and Application Forms for the Craft Fair and Car Show, see the website: [www.DoverOldHomeDays.org](http://www.DoverOldHomeDays.org).

# Dover Historical Society

## Officers and Board of Directors

Elected at the Annual Meeting 3/26/09

President	Elisha Lee	(508)785-1653	eleejr@verizon.net
Vice President	Priscilla Jones	(508)785-0236	priscillapjones@yahoo.com
Secretary	Rich White	(508)785-3197	Rich.White@fmr.com
Treasurer	Sue Fitzgerald	(508)785-2161	suefitzgerald@comcast.net
Caryl House Curator	Barbara Palmer	(508)785-1190	barbarapalmer@comcast.net
Fisher Barn Curator	Jack Hoehlein	(508)479-1937	jhoehlein@hotmail.com
Sawin Museum Curator	Fay Bacher	(508)785-0168	mfayb@aol.com
Buildings and Grounds	Erika Lert	(508)785-1298	enlert@lert.net
Fund Raising	Heather Hodgson	(508)785-1977	UnpackingSolutions @comcast.net
	Alison Campbell	(508)655-2728	aclandscapedesign @verizon.net
Hospitality	Dorothy Boylan	(508)785-1980	DLBoylan@att.net
Public Programs	Nan Leonard	(508)785-0123	NLEONARD11@aol.com
Public Relations	Sue Knowles	(508)785-0858	susanneknowles@aol.com
School Programs	Patty Howe	(508)785-9044	PAHOWE54@yahoo.com
Volunteers	Kay Guild	(508)785-0191	bguild@comcast.net

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### *Call for Help*

The Dover Historical Society has openings for volunteers to help in the following areas: Old Home Day, setting up exhibits, fund-raising, publicity, hospitality and docents to serve as guides in the Society's three museums. Training is provided. For more information, please contact Kay Guild at 508-785--0191.