



HANDI-NOTES

SPRING 2016 VOLUME 7, ISSUE 3
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Bylaw Amendment Governs Dues Due Dates, Late Payment Sanctions

Members approved an amendment to the bylaws on Feb. 25 at an open membership meeting called by the Board. The amended bylaw, ARTICLE V, SECTIONS 1 (d) and 2, have been amended so that annual dues are due and payable on or before of May 31 of each year. Further it was amended that any member who fails to pay annual dues within ninety days of the date of the dues invoice, with due notice having been given by the Treasurer, shall automatically cease to be a member of the Club, unless the Executive Board, for satisfactory cause, extends the time for payment.

The rationale for the amendment is that the Club's fiscal year begins July 1. With full collection occurring at the beginning of the Club's fiscal year it will allow accuracy in the printing of the handbook. Further it was found that past practice allowed too lengthy a collection period.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Spring's a-poppin' and the Club is hoppin'! (And there's a "buzz-buzz.")

Classes are humming along with members busily finishing projects for the Preview Party that is just around the corner on May 23. The Preview Party is the Club's only fundraiser and we hope to see all of you at the party to support our wonderful Club and admire the extraordinary works of art on display by your fellow members. We are in the midst of awe-inspiring craftswomen! Smudge McVickar and her committee are putting the final elements together for the party with an array of exciting raffle items. As always, this is a gala not to be missed!

This spring we expanded our outreach to the community as we began participating in Providence's Gallery Nights. We have had two successful and enthusiastic showings and it has been fun for not only our visitors but also our members who volunteered as room monitors and docents on those nights. Opening our doors to the public is a requirement of some funders of grants and as we look toward our Property Stabilization and Garden Renovation (see Sally Whitin's article and heartfelt remarks), we want to be positioned for eligibility for as many as possible. Melissa Powers is heading up this major effort for us and you will learn more from her following article.

And speaking of outreach, Jen Auber's outreach committee is not only engaged in partnering with outside clubs, galleries, and institutions, but is actively looking at ways to reach the membership. So here's the "buzz-buzz." Some of you have heard "rumors," some accurate, some false, about plans for the Burton Room. In keeping with initiatives set forth in the Strategic Plan, the Board has approved making the Burton Room a more hospitable and "clubby" room by adding additional comfortable furniture. It is hoped that members will utilize the room for social gatherings, seating for those with difficulty

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Editor, Susan Tash



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GALLERY NIGHT PROVES SUCCESSFUL AT LURING PEOPLE TO CLUB AND EXPANDING PUBLIC INTEREST

As part of the Club's community outreach effort, the Handicraft Club has been participating in Providence Gallery Night on the third Thursday of every month. The first Gallery Night the Club opened its doors was on March 17 and, though a stormy night, it was considered a very successful event. The second one, on April 21, had an even larger attendance, with over 70 people marveling at the Club's history, its beauty, and its purpose.

Gallery Night includes more than 20 galleries, artists' studios and art venues which open their doors to the public for tours and viewing. Among the participating venues are RISD Museum, URI Feinstein Providence Campus Gallery, Studio Hop, Dryden Gallery and The Chazan Gallery at Wheeler. Those who visited the Club ranged in age from high school and college age to senior citizens. Everyone was very respectful of the house, according to Jen Auber, outreach coordinator, with interest in every element from the Tynietoy mansion to the furnishings, the Club's history and our handicrafts. Jen said, "We are very happy with the turnout and hope more members get involved."

She noted that this is an important event for the Club because we must be open to the public at least 12 days a year in order to qualify for grants for which we are submitting proposals. Additionally, she said, her committee is attempting to make the public aware of the Club and its unique spot in the community.

Jen says that in order for the Gallery Nights to continue to be successful, she's seeking room monitors to volunteer to be at the Club for two-hour shifts, safeguarding the Club and generally interacting with guests. Please contact Jen (jenauber@me.com or 401.258.5164) if you can be a room monitor for two hours on May 19. Shifts are 5-7 pm and 7-9 pm.

Additionally, Alice Beckwith, archivist, is training docents to be available on Gallery Nights to speak knowledgeably about the Club. She has prepared a script for docents to follow. She,

too, is seeking docent volunteers. Contact Alice (ahrhbeckwith@aol.com or 401.294.4729) if you're available to help.

Club member volunteers for this event have said it's a most positive experience. Jen and Alice encourage you to get involved. For more information on Gallery Night, go to GalleryNight.org.



As part of Gallery Night members volunteer to demonstrate the crafts that they do at the Club. Here members are doing rug hooking at the most recent Gallery Night.

Did you know that the Handicraft Club first met at Mary C. Wheeler's school in 1904 and moved four times before coming to a permanent home at the architecturally significant Truman Beckwith House in 1925?

(Fact from docent guidelines produced by Alice Beckwith for Gallery Night.)



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PLANS FOR PROPERTY STABILIZATION AND GARDEN RENOVATION REVEALED, DETAILS DISCUSSED BY PROJECT MANAGERS

On February 25th the Board hosted a meeting for members to amend the Club's bylaws and present plans for the Property Stabilization and Garden Restoration Project which has been approved by the Board. Guest speakers included Corrie deBoer, Colgate Searle and Melissa Bagga, all of the landscape architecture firm Searle Design Group.

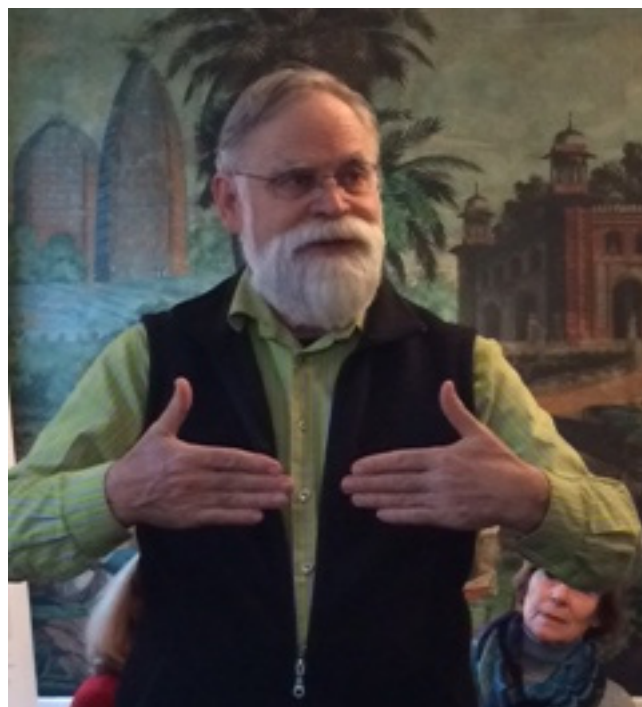
Sally Whitin, chair of the garden committee, spoke eloquently about the property's history and its place in the community before introducing the featured speakers (see her remarks on page 4 of this newsletter). Melissa Bagga described the need to shore up the house's hillside location, attend to the many levels of the grounds, and its lack of handicap accessibility – all of which need attention while preserving historic characteristics. She said that safe accessibility is key, offering safe movement on the site. Further there's the need to reduce storm water flowing over primary walkways.

Colgate Searle told how they analyzed the site, made proposals to improve accessibility and stabilize the property, all the while retaining the look and feel we've grown to love. He spoke about making stairway risers uniform, eliminating stairs where possible, and making paths ADA compliant with handrails along walkways.

He noted that because this winter our water line broke, they will be installing a new water line, as well. The line is currently patched but that's not a long-term fix. They expect to start some of the work this summer as it's essential to fix the water line while the Club is not in use and before classes re-start in the fall. The entire project will be done in phases with the expectation that all work will be complete in 2019.

Member Melissa Powers discussed how she will submit grant proposals to cover the cost of this work, looking for legislative, state and federal grants. Treasurer Trish Sylvester emphasized that there will be no assessment of Club members to pay for this project. (See separate story p. 6.)

Following the meeting members enjoyed a tea with an array of cookies prepared by Sally Whitin.



Colgate Searle of Searle Design Group described the property stabilization project, what they expected to accomplish to make the property safer for all members, and how the landscape would be improved. Further, the water line will be repaired this summer.

Did you know that the mahogany Rhode Island coat of arms in the Club's front hall was carved by Julia Lippitt Mauran and presented by her to the Club?



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SALLY WHITIN'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AT FEBRUARY MEETING FOR PROPERTY STABILIZATION AND GARDEN RESTORATION PROJECT

Mary Bowen owned the lot at the intersection of Benefit and College Streets, which in those days was a dirt track running up the hill to the young Brown University. In 1821 she sold that same lot to a cotton merchant, Truman Beckwith. His plan to build a house there came as a shock to many who considered that part of town to be rough and removed. But Truman Beckwith had a vision. He bought that lot and he hired John Holden Greene, a noted Providence architect, to design a grand residence. The house was built and attracted other prominent families to build houses nearby. The Beckwith house, so dominant on its corner and so refined in organization and detail, served for many as the standard of great residential architecture. Decades later when the RISD library was being designed its architects looked to the Beckwith house just across the street for inspiration. That same house, that Beckwith house, is our house.

The 19th amendment was passed June 4, 1919 granting all American women the right to vote. And just 5 years later the Handicraft Club, now incorporated, bought this house. The women who organized and supported this purchase were plucky, creative and ambitious. They had the courage and the foresight to secure a permanent home for themselves and for generations to come. They would be proud to know that nearly 100 years later Handicraft members are still crossing the threshold of this house they purchased all those years ago. And Truman Beckwith, what would he think? Would he ever have imagined that 190 years later this house would be a beehive of creative activity, friendships and hospitality--intact, preserved and cherished by 420 women.

The club is many things to many people. It is a place where we can learn to weave and paint, knit, stencil, draw, make baskets, sew and gold leaf. A place our mothers may have come to or a place we walked by and wondered what happens inside. A place where we have made friends, gone to parties, and participated in the cultural heritage of Providence. All these things we have been able to do under the umbrella of legacy. The Handicraft Club here in this house is our legacy. It is ours to nurture, preserve and protect. It is no different than our country's historical

sites, public gardens and parks except in scale and ownership. We are its guardian, its steward, and, if we lose it, it is gone. Not only from us but from our children.

So I ask you not to think of the HC as just an arts club, because it is more. We all take classes here just for the doing, the camaraderie or the pride. But each of us has her own very personal meaningful experience here. And so it has been from generation to generation. Here we are today, gathered in this elegant room where Julia Lippitt Mauran once spoke words something like this: **Let this house be as a symbol of our unity of purpose to stand together for all that makes the world more beautiful.**

Peggy Rodgers, who taught decorative arts at the Handicraft Club for 22 years, is retiring from the Club at the end of this spring term. She brought her vast experience in country painting, gold leaf painting, stenciling, clock dials, bronze powder work, penwork and so much more to many of us who appreciate the decorated boxes and trays of days gone by. She was always cheery and enthusiastic, and eager to share her knowledge. While the Club will always have a decorative arts teacher, Peggy Rodgers is irreplaceable.

**New Member Open House
May 25, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

Sponsors of new members are encouraged to bring their potential new members to an open house on May 25. It's one of the open exhibition days that follows the Club's Preview Party. Refreshments will be served to sponsoring members and their guests, 11 a.m.- 1 p.m.



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PREVIEW PARTY MAY 23: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP MAKE THIS A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER

The Club's only fundraiser, its annual Preview Party, is set for Monday, May 23, 6-8 p.m. The party will feature samples of member handicrafts on display. Additionally, there will be a grand raffle for special prizes, among them a week at Izzy Goff's four-bedroom home in Boca Grande, FL, a basket of six bottles of red wine, a signed copy of *Living Newport* by Bettie Bearden Pardee, a large member-painted gold leaf and bronze powder tray and lunch for six at a waterfront Newport private club. Raffle tickets went out to all Club members along with the party invitation.

According to Smudge McVickar, 2nd vice president and chair of the party, the Club asks members to bring hors d'oeuvres for the party. There's a sign-up sheet in the Tynietoy dollhouse room for that. New members as well as long-term members are encouraged to bring their donated hors d'oeuvres, preferably on a disposable plate, to Jackie Hicks in the kitchen when they arrive for the festivities.

Call for Volunteers

The procedures for this party remain as they have in the past. That is, members are asked to bring their handicrafts to the Club on Thursday and Friday, May 19-20. Volunteers are needed to sign in the items for display on these days.

The party follows on Monday the 23rd. Following that, on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 24-25, handicrafts will remain on display for the public. Volunteers are needed to monitor the room then.

Members may pick up their displayed handicrafts on Thursday or Friday, May 26-27. Volunteers are needed for these days, as well, to check out the craft items.

Sign-up sheets for all volunteer missions are at the Club. Smudge asks all to pitch in to help make this event the successful fundraiser the Club deserves.



After 30 years away from his native Azores, Club building supervisor and all-around dependable guy Henry Leite became an American citizen. Here he is at a small gathering the Board held to honor him for his new citizenship as well as his 14 years of service to the Club. Henry shows his citizenship papers to Nancy Moger, president, and Smudge McVickar, 2nd vice president.

Mark Your Calendars

- **May 19-20** Bring handicrafts to Club for display at party, hours 9-3 on May 19, 9-12 on May 20
- **May 23** Party, 6-8 pm
- **May 24-25** Open Exhibition hours 9-7 on the 24th, 9-5 pm on the 25th
- **May 25** New member open house & reception, 11 am-1 pm
- **May 26-27** Pick up and bring home crafts, hours 9-3 May 26 and 9-12 May 27



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JEN AUBER'S OUTREACH PROJECT SEEKS TO CREATE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF CLUB

Jen Auber, outreach coordinator, is seeking leads and ideas from members on how to reach out to the public. Gallery Night is one successful way in which Jen and her committee have made the community aware of the Club and its mission. But she asks members to suggest other methods in which we can achieve the goals of creating community awareness and establishing the Club in the public mind as the great resource it is. Whether it's touching potential artisans and teachers, or businessmen and women, or journalists, or the college community, or philanthropists, or starving artists – Jen asks Club members to think about ideas about how to get our story told. She asks, as well, that you reflect on your connections and talk to her about who you know who might be able to assist the Club in this quest.

Did you know.....

- 1) **There is new information on the website. Committee summaries and minutes of this year's board meetings have been posted.**
- 2) **There is a member event at the Steel Yard on Friday, May 13th. Free box lunches! RSVP to Jen Auber.**
- 3) **The Property Stabilization and Garden Renovation Project should begin this summer. Watch for front yard excavation.**
- 4) **Rebecca has researched and found a new program for class enrollment. Much easier and more intuitive. Look for it in the fall.**
- 5) **Jackie is getting a computer and will be online for better communication with members and teachers.**
- 6) **Jackie and Henry have new titles and commensurate responsibilities—Jackie Hicks is House Manager and Henry Leite is Building Supervisor. Congratulations!**

MELISSA POWERS'S GRANT PROPOSALS TO FUND PROPERTY STABILIZATION & RESTORATION UNDERTAKING

Melissa Powers is securing grants to fund the upcoming Property Stabilization and Garden Restoration Project. (See separate story.) Once final construction expenses are delivered to the Club grants will be submitted.

More importantly, she notes that among strong grant resources is the RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission in Providence. This Commission funds an historic preservation grant program to preserve projects at public historic sites, museums and cultural art centers located in historic structures.

On April 24 a small group of Club members welcomed Katherine Jurczyk, Senior Grants Coordinator from the Commission, to a meeting at the Club. A very positive exchange included a tour inside the house and the gardens and an introduction to our capital campaign, our history, our mission and our community. We understand our eligibility to submit grants includes being open to the public at least 12 days a year. Our outreach to the community includes both our new board position of outreach coordinator, as well as a docent program headed by archivist Alice Beckwith who provided a formal script for member-docents to interpret our beautiful house. One of our first major outreach activities is Gallery Night Providence where we have greeted over 70 new visitors to the Club.

**Annual Meeting
All members invited to attend
Friday, June 17, 12 noon
The University Club
Details on lunch to be sent later.**

Mark your calendars!



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TOUR OF STEEL YARD INDUSTRIAL ARTS CENTER & SCHOOL FOR CLUB MEMBERS SET FOR MAY 13, 11 AM

As part of its effort to reach out to the arts community and create an awareness of the Handicraft Club, as well as to expose Club members to many other artistic venues, Jen Auber and her outreach committee have arranged for a tour of The Steel Yard in Providence with programming director Islay Taylor. The tour is set for Friday, May 13, 11 am-12:30 pm at The Steel Yard, 27 Sims Avenue, Providence.

The Steel Yard is an award-winning industrial arts center, a manufacturer of custom and functional public art, a craft school and shared studio space. It was founded by RISD and Brown graduates Nick Bauta and Clay Rockefeller, who purchased the former Providence Steel and Iron Complex in 2001 and established it as an industrial arts resource for the community. The founders and earliest members of the Steel Yard community created a place that would serve as a sponsor and catalyst for innovative and positive approaches to urban neighborhood revitalization, arts creation, advocacy and education, workforce development, and community growth.

There will be a one-hour tour of the site and studios. Members will hear about the history, mission and programs of the organization and view the Weld to Work crew that is working on a program.

Members will return to the Club for a complimentary box lunch provided by the program committee. The tour and lunch are the combined efforts of the special events and program committees. RSVP to Jennifer Auber, (401.258.5164 or jenauber@me.com).

If you'd like to learn more about the Steel Yard, please join the Club tour on May 13 and click on these links:

<http://www.thesteelyard.org>

http://www.thesteelyard.org/special/weld_to_work

PRESIDENT'S LETTER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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standing through a party and as an offering for members who want to plan family events or gatherings at the Club. We will also be renovating the caterer's kitchen and providing convenient areas for member refreshments when using the Burton Room. This renovation will require some classes to meet in a new venue, but wherever you meet, adequate facilities and lighting will be provided.

This year, the Board has voted to move the Annual Meeting to June 17th to coincide better with our year end. A luncheon will be offered at the University Club at noon, followed by the Annual Meeting at 1:00 pm. You will be receiving detailed information and our new slate of officers in the near future. We hope you will attend to discuss our year in review. The input we received from our roundtable discussions at last year's meeting drove many of our initiatives and we hope you will participate in a follow-up discussion as to what steps we should take going forward. Additionally, the Annual Meeting is an opportunity to welcome new board members and thank those retiring from the board who have served faithfully and untiringly.

And, after 22 years of faithful and untiring teaching, Peg Rodgers is retiring from the Handicraft Club. Peg has been a cornerstone of our faculty and has garnered an ardent group of students and admirers over her tenure. She has been a remarkable asset to our mission of pursuing, preserving, and sharing the joy of her craft, Early American Decoration. She will be dearly missed by all.

Finally, as I complete my first year as president, I want to thank you all for your continued support and participation in the Handicraft Club. And very special thanks go out to my fellow board members who diligently and humbly achieved so much this year.

Have a great summer,
Nancy Moger