



HANDI-NOTES

WINTER 2019 VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1
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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members

Happy New Year. As we begin a new year, there is so much to reflect upon at the Handicraft Club after at least a year's worth of often contentious debate and some strained relationships. A few weeks ago the Club membership voted, by a narrow margin (literally an 18 vote spread) not to approve the use of \$3 million of the club's funds to fund the purchase and renovations of Hoppin House. No matter how one perceives the vote, it is our collective responsibility to place this behind us and move forward.

The reality is that it was a dispute over facilities and finances. Unfortunately, there was misinformation and lobbying that was excessive and inappropriate, and it created a negative atmosphere. I want to assure you that the Club is in excellent financial shape and could have afforded to make the proposed move. If it were otherwise, this process would never have come to a vote. The Board fully understood their fiduciary responsibilities and completed an all-encompassing review. The general membership, by a small margin, chose not to support the Board's recommendation to approve this move, although that recommendation was based on well-researched financial projections. In the member survey last year, fully 77% of those responding indicated an interest in relocating the Club, and we may need to continue exploring options. Unfortunately, at present all the problems associated with Truman Beckwith remain, and we will have to develop a plan for the future as became evident throughout the past year.

Over two years ago, the Board established a Long-Range Planning committee, chaired by Sharleen

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BULLETIN BOARD

Teacher Anastasia Azure is seeking a part-time consultant for marketing/sales strategies to help expand her art and jewelry business. If you know someone who might be interested, please give him or her Anastasia's contact information: ana@anastasiaazure.com

Editor, Susan Tash



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CLUB ESTABLISHES \$100,000 FUND WITH RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION TO GROW ITS ENDOWMENT

The Handicraft Club has established a \$100,000 fund with the Rhode Island Foundation. Founded in 1916, the Rhode Island Foundation is the only community foundation in the state. It consists of more than 1700 components named funds – individual donors and families as well as over 350 organizational endowments whose total value is now just under \$1 billion.

As a public charity, RIF employs long-term investment, spending and operating strategies to ensure that dollars entrusted to them by generous Rhode Islanders last forever and have the greatest possible impact on the community. The RIF has a diversified asset allocation and sets high performance standards for its investment managers.

According to Carol Golden, Senior Philanthropic Advisor at the Foundation, “The two reasons non-profits look to partner with the Foundation are, first, that they become part of a large investment pool whose size allows a sophisticated investment strategy and excellent returns, and, secondly, the Foundation assists non-profits with fundraising. Any non-profit organization that has an endowment with the Foundation can seek assistance with donors who wish to make gifts through an endowment – either through a charitable trust or charitable annuity or a bequest”. The Foundation helps donors structure those types of gifts and assists with gift planning. Golden added, “Organizations that work with us see the advantage of the partnership.”

The hallmark of the Foundation portfolio is its diversification, which contributes to the fund doing so well over time. Additionally, their 1% fee is appealingly reasonable, Golden noted. The Handicraft Club’s account at the Foundation is a Flexible Endowment, which means that the Club may take back its investment in the fund in the future if necessary.

Golden says “It’s like a charitable mutual fund,” and the Club gets the advantage of those benefits.

Handicraft Club President Fran Gammell-Roach notes that the Club has had an endowment since 1964 to support maintenance

and repair of its historic property. Of the decision to transfer funds to the Foundation, Fran says, “We want our donors to know they’re giving to a permanent fund that is part of a large, well-established community fund.”

TYNIETOY FEATURED IN ESSAY; HISTORIANS TO VISIT IN MARCH

Club Historian Alice Beckwith reports that she worked with Brown University Student Eloise Maxwell as she mounted her essay, *Telling Her Story: Women Designers in Rhode Island* (<http://rhodetour.org/tours/show/33>).

Maxwell highlighted the Handicraft Club and its sponsorship of Amey Vernon and Marion Perkins as they established the Tynietoy Dollhouse Company. Maxwell has since withdrawn from Brown and Alice will be working with two more students assigned to study Perkins and Vernon. The students will be working under Brown Assistant Professor of art history Itohan Osayimwese. Osayimwese hopes to bring her students to the Club in early March so that Alice can give them an upfront and personal tour.

Student Eloise Maxwell noted that “the story of Tynietoy offers a rare example of female entrepreneurship in a period when women were not encouraged to work, let alone run a company. Perkins, much like the founders of the Handicraft Club, aimed to promote an appreciation of hand-crafted design, both within the local community and further afield, offering her own form of historic preservation in miniature.”

The Club purchased a Tynietoy Colonial mansion in 2013, and set up a heritage fund in order to furnish and maintain the mansion. New members may wish to know about the mansion now located just outside the kitchen and can find more on the Club’s website.



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KARIN CONOPASK, MEMBER FOR 34 YEARS, REFLECTS ON HER EARLY YEARS AT THE CLUB -- THE GARDEN, FRIENDS, FIRST CLASSES

Thirty-five years ago a young mother, Karin Conopask, heard about the Handicraft Club from Polly Harkness, the mother of two of her friends. Polly knew Karin loved to sew and she thought she'd enjoy the couture sewing class taught by Betsy Reed. Reed was a respected teacher and her class was always packed. So the first class Karin took was bookbinding located in the basement at 42 College Street, because Reed's class was full.

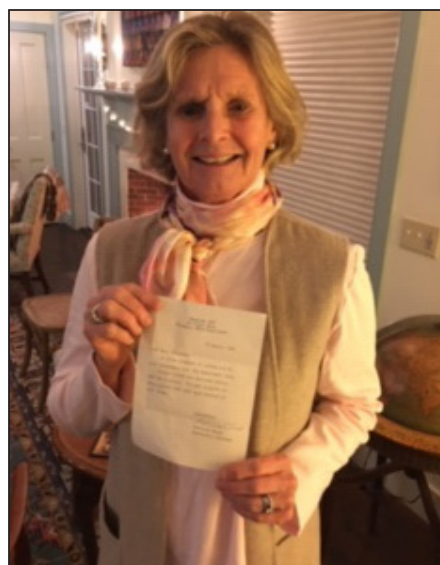
The next term Karin finally got into Betsy Reed's class and sewed with Betsy for seven years. Eventually Betsy and her husband retired and moved to Ohio. Thus for one year Karen was enlisted to teach a beginning sewing class.

At the time Karin joined she had two kids, ages 7 and 3. By the time the children were older (and joined by a third sibling), Karin had been at the Club for eight years. It was then that she decided to go back to graduate school at URI. There she earned a Masters degree in historic textiles and textile conservation. Subsequently she became a curator at Slater Mill Historic Site in Pawtucket, where she served for 10 years. It was also during this time that she took a weaving class at the Club with Alice Marcoux and got hooked on weaving. She also did weaving at Slater Mill, mounted exhibits there and cared for the collection and machinery.

Karin then became the Executive Director of Court House Center for the Arts in W. Kingstown for four years, followed by a job at URI where she was Director of Development for 10 years. More recently she has done development work at St. Michaels Country Day School.

Now semi-retired, Karin is looking for her next venture. She does a lot of weaving, she says, and likes to be busy and on a schedule.

Back in 1984 when she joined the Club – initiation fees and dues were each \$50– she remembers bringing her youngest child, Pete, to class and just setting him up on the sewing table. Now her daughter and two boys are 41, 37 and 31 and living in New York City and Darien. Their Handicraft Club table-sitting days are over.



Karin Conopask proudly displays her Handicraft Club acceptance letter from 1984.

But Karin has not lost her love of the Club, its culture and the individuals she's met. In her early years her one day away from the children and in Providence was a "day out of jail." It was a day when she could take care of herself and not somebody else, even if the somebody else was children whom she adored.

Karin says she's taken two weaving classes with Anastasia Azure and plans on taking more. When she first went into semi-retirement and began taking classes again at the Club, she said she'd been away for a long time but always knew she'd come back. "It was the same old Handicraft Club," she says, "but there were many new faces." She added that she's grateful for Truman's Trolley. Back in the old days, she had to park all over Providence and walk to the Club. Truman's Trolley was a terrific brainstorm, she adds.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Bowen, whose members included Club past Presidents, committee chairs and members experienced in strategic planning. With input from round table discussions at the 2017 Annual meeting and the answers from the Membership Survey in the spring of 2017, the committee worked over the next year on a values statement, long-range objectives and governance. The Club's mission: *"Inviting women to pursue, preserve and share the joy of handicrafts in an historic house"* was the basis for all the subsequent work. Draft forms of the values statement, objectives, and Board structure were presented and discussed at the January '19 Board meeting and will be further reviewed in February. These are working documents formed from broad Club input and will need additional input to be able to truly reflect the Club's values and objectives. We encourage all members to read, digest, suggest edits, additions, etc. while we work towards finalizing them this spring.

For now, the Board asks you to read and comment on this

Handicraft Club Values Statement Draft

We honor our legacy of handicraft education. _____

We value a supportive and inclusive environment for women built on respect, friendship, encouragement and kindness. _____

We invite member participation and creativity in all aspects of the Club. _____

We value learning from talented teachers and fellow members. _____

We embrace the practice of handicrafts for personal fulfillment, enjoyment and growth. _____

We welcome an exchange of knowledge and ideas with non-members and other cultural organizations. _____

We value the stewardship of a historic building as our Club's home. _____

We value responsible stewardship in the areas of governance, financial and asset oversight, mission, planning, and the Club's standing in the community. _____

The Board will be sharing the draft objectives after the February Board meeting. Again, the Board welcomes all input regarding this values statement draft. The best way to adopt a Values Statement that connects us to the past and the future is to have as many members as possible take the time to read it, reflect and comment on it.

Sincerely,

Fran Gammell-Roach, President

Your Handicraft Club Board:

Kit Barnum	Bobbie Binder
Sharleen Bowen	Sara Carcier
Jay Connelly	Deb Drinker
Margie Edwards	Kate Farrington
Fran Gammell-Roach	Pam Gardner
Janet Jagger	Margaret Lederer
Sharon Linder	Jozy Mainelli
Trish Poirrier	Mary Reineman
Sandy Richter	Marilyn Shealey
Sally Whitin	Judy Wilson

The Historical Society of Early American Decoration will host its annual exhibition April 12-14 in Amherst MA at Hotel UMASS Conference Center. Many Club members belong to this organization.

If you want to see the best of the best in American Decorative Painting, be sure to attend this free exhibition.

Further details from teacher Karin Graves or Handi-notes editor Susan Tash.





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KAREN CONOPASK PROFILE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

She added that she used to spend a lot of time working on the garden with a group of women. “Now that I have more free time I look forward to volunteering with a bunch of members to work on the back garden again and to filling it with flowers. We used to have our lunch in the back garden and I hope to help make it beautiful again, just like in the front.” Karin’s daughter reminds her that she, too, was brought along as a child to do weeding in the garden.

Karin laughed, “The group of ladies that I sewed with told some very interesting jokes, kind of off-color. I’d go home at night and repeat these jokes to my husband. He’d scratch his head and be mystified about the Club where I went once a week, child-free.”

Karin still has her acceptance letter c. 1984 from the Club, a cherished reminder of the many friends and good memories she’s made at 42 College Street.

The Fuller Craft Museum, located in Brockton, MA, is only 52 minutes from Providence. If you want to be inspired, take a trip to see exhibitions and enjoy hands-on workshops. It’s open Tuesdays-Sundays 10-5 but Thursdays it’s open until 9 pm.

**Note:
Decorative Painting teacher Karen Graves’s cell phone number is 401.474.7241. Please make that correction in your directory for future use.**

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS TO PREVIEW 42 COLLEGE ST. DURING ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Society of Architectural Historians will hold its 72nd Annual International Conference in Providence April 24-28. Club historian Alice Beckwith, a member of the Society since 1968, will conduct a tour for Society members of 42 College Street on Saturday, April 27, 2-3:00 PM.

Alice invites members of the Handicraft Club to participate as room monitors during the tour. Members of the Archives committee will also participate.

Alice says that her tour for the Architectural Historians will be similar to one she gave in September for attendees at the Arts and Crafts Conference. She will point out the exterior of 42 College Street as a supreme example of John Holden Greene’s federal period architecture and as the model for the exterior of the Pendelton wing of the RISD Museum by the architectural firm of Stone, Carpenter and Willson.

She will then look at the three historical rooms in the main house with special reference to the ca. 1818 Velay panoramic Tiger Hunt wallpaper in the double parlor, and then process out through the dollhouse room with a stop at the Tynietoy dollhouse.

Alice will have handouts for those who want them and will ask volunteers to hand these to visitors as they depart. A total of 40 will be touring, split into two groups of 20. The two groups will shift between 42 College and the Athenaeum. If you’re interested in participating and helping Alice in this – and, by the way, learning a lot about the history of the Club – please let Alice know of your interest. (ahrbeckwith@aol.com)



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HOLIDAY PARTY FEATURES GOOD FOOD, BEVERAGES AND RAFFLED GIFTS



Barbara Colt and Kay Lisle (photo at left) toast the holiday while in photo below teacher Anastasia Azure (r.) chats with Joyce and Bill Fennell.



Above (l.) class co-chair Deb Drinker (l.) and Club office manager Rebecca Siemering. Above (r.) are Club President Fran Gammell-Roach and 1st VP Margaret Lederer enjoying the raffle picks.



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PARTY GUESTS ENJOYED THE SPIRIT OF THE EVENING



In photo at left are Warren Jagger, Kay Lisle, Trish Poirrier, Izzy Goff and Janet Jagger. Below are Lauren & Vivien Jones.



To the left are guest Sue Moore, Ann Holmes and Mary Gilbane. Pam and Brad Gardner (below) with Sara Carcieri. Bottom left, Karen Rosenbaum and Trish Poirrier.





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USE TRUMAN'S TROLLEY TWICE A WEEK FOR ONLY \$6.25 PER DAY, A DEAL COMPARED TO OTHER OPTIONS

Truman's Trolley is still running and members who use it are lauding it for its convenience. On a recent particularly wet and windy day last week, users appreciated the door-to-door convenience when driver Andy made stops at each member's car.

Members who find the Trolley especially helpful and a great bargain are those who go to the Club two or three times a week, whether it's for classes or meetings. If you're there twice a week for eight weeks, your cost for a day of Truman's Trolley is \$6.25. And if you're only at the Club once a week, your weekly cost is \$12.50. Compare that to the price of a parking ticket (\$25) or a parking lot space (\$17 in many places). Truman's Trolley is a deal. If you haven't yet tried it, consider buying a spring term pass.

Members also may buy a one-day pass from Jackie or Rebecca to keep in their wallets—so on a bad weather day they may just hop on the trolley instead of parking on the street. The one-day pass is also a way for members to see for themselves how convenient and simple it is to ride the trolley.



During the cold and blustery winter it's always uplifting to look at a photo of the Club taken in warmer months and be reminded of what's ahead for us. Another few months.....



Deb Drinker and Sandy Richter each paint a loaf of crusty bread in Margaret Owen's class on a recent gloriously sunny day. The assignment was to paint from a picture.

11 NEW MEMBERS JOIN THE CLUB REPRESENTING MANY AREAS

The Club welcomed 11 new members since November.

From Barrington new members are Susannah Holloway, Rita Nenonen and Sharon Gilman. Susan Graseck of Pawtucket also joined the Club.

New members from Providence are Karen Pizzarello, Allison Spadone, Maureen Taylor and Ellen Bruzelius. New member Gail Freitas lives in Rehoboth, MA. And Frances Mossberg comes from Warwick.

Nancy Lerner of Providence was reinstated as a member, as well.

Please introduce yourself in the lunchroom or in classes if you should come upon these new members whom we warmly receive to our world of crafts.