



Joshua Crowell
August 22, 1912 ----March 16, 1997

What can we say, or do, to honor this man, who was honor itself? We must all work together to try to fill the giant empty space he has left in our midst. That is what he would want us to do.
We love you, Cousin Josh.

WANT TO DATE YOUR HOUSE?

Come to Jericho House on Wednesday, May 7 from 2-4 P.M. and hear Sarah Korjeff from the Cape Cod Commission explain available resources, the process and how to fill out the proper forms to record your house in the registry of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. If you plan to attend, please let us know by calling 398-8842. Bring pen and paper and come comfortable dressed. We hope some of you will discover what fun house dating can be.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We like to let our members know from time to time the names of those who have joined DHS in recent months. Since we last reported, the following have joined: Mary W. Monahan, Kerry H. Donovan, Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Adams, Enid-Louise N. Gould, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Wilcox, Jr., James B. Merchant, Vernon D. Ellars, Edmund J. Poutasse, Dr. John Monbouquette, and Charles P. Buckley (Life Member). In addition to this impressive list, Albert E. Kelley has also become a Life Member. Welcome all!

PUZZLING PERPLEXITIES

Another acquisition to the collection of DHS has prompted this article. The original sign of the well-known tearoom called "The Sign of the Motor Car" has been donated by Tony Hayden. The story of that establishment which opened near Scargo Lake in 1910 and of its founders, Margaret (Howes) and Hayden Richardson is told in our history. But you might be interested to learn more about the other business which the Richardsons founded, the manufacture of Perplexity Puzzles which began in 1907.

Before coming to live in Dennis, where Margaret's roots were, the Richardsons lived a somewhat Bohemian life in New York City, associating with struggling young artists and actors. Both coming from fine old New England families, they were also included in society events. At the time, week-end house parties were the rage, and non-stop bridge games the favorite entertainment. Margaret and Hayden were also invited to up-scale weekends in the Boston area where, about 1907, jigsaw puzzles for adults were becoming popular. "A relative of my husband's suggested that I take advantage of the cut-puzzle craze, then starting in Boston. This appealed to me, as making puzzles seemed rather good fun..." said Margaret in a brief autobiography. And so she started the business which she called Perplexity Puzzles, creating demanding puzzles which were individualized for each customer.

It turned out to be both fun and profitable and a new fashionable pastime was introduced to New York. The puzzles were cut by the Richardsons' artist friends, not into interlocking pieces as we have today, but into a wide variety of shapes, with curves and straight lines, often with no overlapping of color to help in putting pieces together. They ranged in size from just a few pieces to 700 pieces and sold from 75 cents to \$7.00, depending on size. One puzzle, which was created on the order of the Duchess of Marlboro, contained 2700 pieces. They were sold exclusively through Brentano's on Fifth Avenue.

After the Richardsons moved to Dennis, where they opened what is thought to have been the first "B and B" on the Cape, they continued to manufacture their Perplexity Puzzles. William H. "Willie" Lord, who lived on New Boston Road, cut puzzles for the business. One collector that we know of has a Perplexity box which states that it was created by Mrs. Hayden Richardson and made in Dennis, Massachusetts. Wouldn't we like to have one of those for the collection!

Our thanks go to Mr. Hayden for the donation of "The Sign of the Motor Car." I will not describe it for you, must be seen to be appreciated! Check it out at the Manse this season. And check your attic

CALENDAR

April 9 Board meets in Al Reylik's haymow

Coming in May--mark your calendars now!

May 6 Annual Town Meeting at Nathaniel H. Wixon School
May 7 2-4 P.M. Jericho House
Workshop: How to Date and Document an Antique House, led by Sarah Korjeff of CCC (see above)
May 10-18 Cape Cod Maritime Week '97
May 12-22 School trips at Josiah Dennis Manse
May 14 7:30 P.M. Board meets in Brendan Joyce's barn

DIAL "HISTORY"

We tend to be very proud of what our predecessors in this great town accomplished, like the invention of the paper bag, the beginning of cranberry cultivation and the adventures of our mariners, but we must not forget that living among us today are folks who have also made contributions to our lives by their accomplishments. One such man is Edmund Poutasse, a Dennis resident since 1987. He is a veteran of the Korean conflict, and while serving in Japan he was a news editor for the Stars and Stripes. Professionally, Ed has enjoyed a fine career in public relations and fund raising for not-for profit institutions, mostly in the field of health and it was while working for the U.S. Public Health service in the city of New York that he had an idea which has become a very popular one for businesses and public service. New York City Public Health Department had launched a program to add measles to the list of diseases for which children would be inoculated. Ed's job was to get out the word that immunization for measles was available free of charge to all children. He posted signs in subways and buses with the telephone number which should be called for information. But nobody called! How was the word to be spread? Then Ed had his brainstorm--a taped message which could be reached by dialing MEASLES! With the help of a doubting Tel and Tel representative, he worked out the number and set up the switchboard with the tapes. And sure enough, folks who saw his message began to call. Perhaps some people called just because of the novelty of the idea but certainly the word was so much easier to remember than the numbers. Anyway, call they did, and in Ed's words, "...the disease surely did hit the dust." The idea soon caught on with other public service campaigns and now we regularly dial words instead of numbers to reach many types of services and businesses. Haven't you always wondered who had that great idea? Well, now you know!

In Arizona working for the HiDesert Medical Foundation, Ed suffered a bite from the brown fiddleback spider and that, coupled with an old service injury, made it necessary for his right lower leg to be amputated. Ed did not rest on the laurels of his already successful life, however. After moving to Dennis he has counseled other amputees in how to adjust to their loss, and has written two novels. In 1991 Ed was named Volunteer of the Year by the Dennis Housing Authority... "For taking the initiative to organize and coordinate the Volunteer Program and for personally donating more than 650 hours." He is also a great cook, and even knows how to dip chocolates! So hats off to Ed Poutasse, one of our neighbors who has initiative, public spirit and is also the creator of a good idea which continues to simplify our lives.

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