



50¢ AN HOUR...AND BRING YOUR OWN SHOVEL

During the early morning hours on December 30 I was wakened by a yellow flashing light in my room and the sound of a snow plow going by so I knew the snow that was an inch deep at bedtime had multiplied. If you are like me you groaned a bit when you awoke and contemplated the foot or so of snow that had to be relocated so you could get out for the morning paper, get the car out, feed the birds, etc. Luckily, for me, the second thought was remembering that my grandsons were here on school vacation, so my snow removal chore consisted of preparing a hearty breakfast and maintaining a pot of hot chocolate while I watched my daughter and grandson do the relocating. I remembered back to my much younger days when Edward E. Crowell was Surveyor of Highways and the snow removal cost for 1939 was \$2,009.00. After a snow storm the town came almost to a halt while many of the able bodied men and boys turned out to clean up the town. A truck carting off snow earned \$1.50 an hour, while a truck with a snow plow made \$3.00, and the going price for shoveling snow was 50¢ an hour, and you had to provide your own shovel! We had snow days from school and I'm sure we loved every one of them just as todays kids do. In 1917 each village had its own Surveyor of Highways. In South Dennis it was Charles L. Thacher, in West Dennis-W. H. Kelley, In Dennis Port- Alton L. Robbins, East Dennis-Howard Sears, Seth H. Howes in Dennis Village and their expenses for snow removal was \$508. 09. The going rate for shoveling was raised to 25¢ an hour, from 20¢ in 1916. The big drifts that the teams couldn't get through were dug out by hand. My mother grew up on Christian Hill in Dennis Port (where Benny's now stands) and said she and her brothers and sisters watched with bated breath to see if Mr. Alton could get up the hill with his team of mules. Evidently a big drift formed at the foot of the hill, and if he couldn't make it with the plow he wouldn't be able to make it later on with the school barge until it was dug out. So--even in 1917 the kids looked forward to snow days. Some things never change. One thing that has changed is the cost for snow removal. In 1992 it was \$105,140.38--but it is nice to have the roads plowed and sanded so we can go about our daily activities almost as if it hadn't snowed.

JERICHO OPEN HOUSE

A surprising number of people braved the storm on December 5th and slogged their way to Jericho for the 1993 DHS Christmas Open House. They were well rewarded for their efforts. The minute you entered you were greeted by lovely sounds, friendly smiles, and delicious aromas. The lovely sounds emanated from the front parlor where Miss Katie Lynch was playing some old favorites and some classics on her harp to standing room only. The friendly smiles were everywhere. Perhaps it seemed a little nicer to be in such a warm, cordial atmosphere compared to the dismal day outside. That's really part of the charm of our snug, old Cape Cod houses--when you walk in the door you have the feeling of being "home". The delicious aroma came from all the great variety of homemade goodies, the mulled cider, and especially from our famous, one-and-only, Col. Negus Punch. As always, the house was beautifully decorated by the ladies of the West Dennis Garden Club. Many thanks to Hospitality Chairman Gertrude Lailey and her helpers from the DHS Board for a lovely afternoon. I'm sure Elizabeth Reynaud would hve beamed with pride if she could have seen her Jericho in such festive array.

17TH ANNUAL MID-WINTER FESTIVITY

It's time once again for us hardy souls who "winter over" on the Cape to gather at Christine's Restaurant and chase away those mid-winter doldrums. We will assemble at 12 noon for cocktails and raise a toast to the late Selectman Mary Hood Hagler whose idea it was 17 years ago to do 'something special' to banish the mid-winter blues. Luncheon starts at 1:00 P.M. See the reservation form below for selection. The entertainment will be provided by the Mid-Cape Chorus. For those who have heard them before you know we are in for a treat.

FLAG CEREMONY POSTPONED

The same storm that made Jericho seem like such a safe haven washed out the flag disposal ceremony at Merrill Park. It was postponed to the following Sunday which also turned out to have bad weather. It was then decided to postpone it until June 12 of this year, the Sunday before Flag Day. The Fire Department at Station 1, Rt. 28 will continue to receive flags in need of disposal.

MID-WINTER LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS FEBRUARY 12 CHRISTINE'S RESTAURANT
Please make reservations for _____ people. I enclose a check for \$____ (\$11 ea.)
Choice of entree: ___ Boneless Stuffed Chicken ___ Baked Scrod w/Lemon Butter
Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and send to:
Mr. Joshua Crowell
Box 963
Dennis, MA 02638

CALENDAR

Jan. 13 7:30 P.M. DHS Board meets at the Manse.
Jan. 31 How many New Year's Resolutions have you been able to keep?
Feb. 12 12 noon Mid-Winter Festivity at Christine's Restaurant, West Dennis.

UPDATE ON DENNIS HISTORY

For the friends who are interested in the progress of the book we spoke with the Publishing Committee and the Author. The following is a message that went out to the sponsors: "20 December 1993 Dear Friends, Although we had anticipated our History of Dennis would be available in this our bicentennial year, because of unforeseen delays it will not be ready until sometime in 1994. We are happy to report that the first sections have been delivered to our publishers and a publication date should soon be available. Thank you for your patience. The Publishing Committee." Nancy Thatcher Reid informs us that the publisher is typesetting, they're working on style and design, and that decision should be made in a week or two, and that everything is "moving along". The Publishing Committee says there is still time for anyone else to become a sponsor and have their name printed in the book. If you are interested mail a check for \$100.00 and please print the way you would like to have your name listed to DHS Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660. Also: Jim Carr is still looking for a picture of the wharves at Dennis Port. At the turn of the century almost every home in Dennis Port had one of these pictures hanging somewhere in the house. It seems strange that we can't locate at least one of them. If anyone has any ideas of places for us to check please drop Jim a line c/o DHS, Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660.

LAST CALL FOR TIME CAPSULE

Acid-free paper was distributed at the Bicentennial Ecumenical Service and has also been available at the Town Clerks office for anyone to write a message to go into the time capsule for our descendants to read in 2093. There has been a slight delay in getting the time capsule, so everyone still has time to finish their letter if they already have the paper, or to pick up some paper at the Town Clerks office. The message can be written in pencil, ballpoint pen, or typewriter. We would like a cross section of Dennis people telling something of their past, their daily life, or their hopes for the future. Your letters should be returned to the Town Clerks office by the end of January.

A DIFFERENT THERMOMETER

Our good friend, Dennis historian, and story teller Josh Crowell has another slice of Dennis history for us. "The 'wet picking' of cranberries is a reasonably new procedure. Now-a-days berries harvested by this modern method are processed immediately as sauce or juice or frozen for later use. In the old days all cranberries were dry picked and could be kept for quite some time, and if kept from freezing increased in value. Henry R. Chapman of East Dennis was not adverse to making a little extra from his crop. His brother-in-law's house next door was unoccupied, so Henry stored his berries in Levi Chase's keeping room while the price escalated. If the berries were allowed to freeze you lost money, if you kept a fire going that cost money. Henry solved that dilemma by sleeping in an adjacent room (probably the parlor) with a bucket of water beside the bed. Periodically during the night Henry would awaken, stick his fingers in the water and if his sense of touch indicated a skimming of ice he would arise and build a fire. The next day he surely checked the cranberry quotations in the Boston paper or called the local agent of a Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore commission house to see where he could realize the best price." Thanks, Josh! I understand this was a story inherited from his father, Nathan Crowell of East Dennis. Cape Codders of old (before television) were great story tellers. Any story worth telling was handed down for several generations. If you know an old Cape Codder talk to them for a while and you are sure to hear a story that was handed down to them.

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660

Non-Profit
Organization
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 2
So. Dennis, MA
02660

