

ROWAYTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

177 ROWAYTON AVENUE, ROWAYTON, CT 06853



EXHIBIT HOURS
Tuesdays 9:30 am – 3 pm
1st Sunday of the month
1 – 4 pm
and by appointment

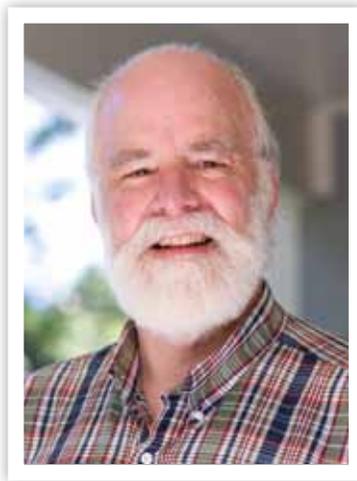
**half shell gift shop
HOURS**
Monday - Saturday 11 - 3
and by appointment

FALL 2013

PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE *at the* RHS

Blaikie Hines

Fine art conservationist and Civil War historian Blaikie Hines has shared his considerable expertise with the RHS. This year he undertook the cleaning, reframing, and restoration of some of the RHS' Connecticut Impressionist paintings. He also helped to deepen our understanding of Connecticut's role in the Civil War. The author of several books on the subject and a Civil War re-enactor, Hines was able to help us make the connections between soldiers, the battles they fought and the effect the war had on towns in Connecticut, Rowayton in particular. He also played the role of an enlisted soldier at our Fall 2012 encampment.



In 1977, Hines began his career in art conservation. Studying with a number of nationally prominent restorers and with colleagues from the Smithsonian, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Yale University, Hines became adept in his field.

For many years, he was the principle owner of Accent Picture Framing in Darien. In 1989, Hines and his family moved to Thomaston, Maine where he owns a gallery and continues in partnership with Accent Picture Framing.

"The study of history establishes continuity with the past and reveals who we are as a people" Mr. Hines explains. "I am glad to help the historical society in any way I can; with the preservation and restoration of their painting collection and with furthering their knowledge of American history."

Dear Friends:

The Society is fortunate to have a rich archive of photographs, textiles, and artifacts. Among this invaluable collection is an extraordinary group of Connecticut Impressionist paintings of Rowayton. A vital goal for the next year is to restore them with the help of our community. Connecticut Impressionism was an important and influential movement in America and produced several national and internationally known artists. We are working towards the goal of having our paintings properly displayed at Pinkney. We hope you will join us with a donation towards this effort.

2013 has been year of growth and community outreach for the Historical Society. As you can see from this newsletter, our programming and exhibitions have touched many in our community. Elementary school students, gardeners, RHS members, and scholars have all benefited from our increased efforts. We plan on continuing to meet the challenges and goals for the RHS in 2014.

Your continued support ensures that we can enrich our community with interesting and relevant programming and events. Become a member and help preserve our shared history. We look forward to seeing you all at the Holiday Open House on December 1st!

The Rowayton Historical Society
Board of Trustees

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Ernie Wiegand

GROWING UP IN STAMFORD, Ernie Wiegand was 13 when he found his first arrowhead. That find sparked a lifetime interest and commitment to archeology. Professor Wiegand started his career by volunteering

at the Stamford Historical Society as a teenager. He joined the Museum's archeology club and searched sites as far away as Pound Ridge.

In 1975, he and Norwalk Community College colleague Olivia Vlahos were awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to teach a program in archeology. Since that time, hundreds of students have taken courses in the Department of Archeology at Norwalk Community College and over 300 have graduated with archeology certificates. Professor Wiegand also heads the Norwalk Archeology Club.

"Most people are unaware of the depth of time, even at our local level. People were here from 14-20 thousand years ago, and we have the archeological record to show it. We can see how people coped with climate changes and changes

in the animal and plant population, just as we are doing today. We can see the impact this has had on human populations both in terms of the physical and cultural changes that have taken place." Asked what his most memorable find has been, Professor Wiegand spoke about the mastodon remains he found in Lake Kitchawan in Pound Ridge. "They were radio carbon dated to 10,000 years ago, and we found some artifacts from humans not far away too, meaning that both species were living in proximity to one another at that time."

Wiegand sees his commitment to learning as part of what he can give to his community. He regularly holds lectures and as a leader in regional archeology, encourages scholarship and interest in his field. He will be conducting an introductory course in archeology this fall at the college and invites all who are interested to join him. This spring he visited the historical society and helped third graders understand Native American life and presence in the Five Mile River region. "I got a lot of sophisticated questions and lively talk. It was a great group of kids with lots of energy. I enjoy getting people excited about the history of where they live. To gain a sense of the changes that have occurred over time, what happened and why we are at the place we are now, helps people develop a sense of history and continuity. Archeology puts knowledge to work!"

Joanne Gray

DESIGNER AND OWNER of the boutique *Seaside Delights at the half shell* and a native of Cornwall, England, Joanne Gray came to America in 1994 after several years of international travel to work at her cousin's restaurant, McKenzie's in Greenwich. She met her husband while working there and was married in 1999.

Joanne began designing and producing stationary that she sold at local stores and online. Then she decided to put her designs on t-shirts and clothing for children, and her business took off. Gray has been inspired to design by several things: the need to dress her children in clothes that are not only comfortable, but well-fitting and feature colorful and innovative graphics. "If there is a need for something, I'm going to make it" she says. "Whether it's kids' clothes, paper goods, pillows, or whatever." Gray has been inspired by the seashore and Long Island Sound. Whether collecting hermit crabs with her children at the beach or seeing the horseshoe crabs, shells, lobsters, whales, octopus, shrimp and local fish along coastal New England, Gray has been inspired by all their shapes and colors. "This is my dream job. I love working for myself and interacting with all my appreciative customers. Working with the Rowayton Farmers Market has been a blast, too. I'm always looking around me to see what new designs I can come up with, and love customizing clothing for people.

Page McBrier



PAGE MCBRIER WANTED TO USE HER COLLEGE DEGREE in theater and education as a teaching tool. The author of 43 children’s books, most notably the best seller *Beatrice’s Goat* and a number of *Goosebumps* and *Tree House* books for young readers, McBrier decided to branch out and became a Teaching Artist for the Connecticut Office of the Arts where she develops and teaches programs state-wide in a variety of educational settings.

This year in collaboration with RHS, Farm Creek Nature Preserve and Rowayton School, she developed a week long program for third graders that explored Native American life in the Five Mile River region. “Working with the Historical Society, I was struck by how much history Native Americans have in our neighborhood. We are still finding artifacts they left behind...arrow-heads on the beach and in driveways. Roads and places with Native names. I wanted the children of our community to honor and remember the contribution and legacy of Native people. The Siwanoy tribe was a thriving community. They

were drawn to the Five Mile River for the same reasons we are today. Beautiful prospects, fishing, boating, trade and lush vegetation make our town what it is. The Historical Society preserves the deep history Rowayton possesses, and continues to make the sense of place we have here a valued, interesting and relevant part of our community.”

Working with the Historical Society, I was struck by how much history Native Americans have in our neighborhood.



I am so glad the Historical Society gave me the opportunity to work with them in Pinkney Park. It’s a beautiful location and I love being part of something so worthwhile—the preservation of Rowayton history.

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PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Continued from page 3

The “Party People”

One of the most “entertaining” groups at the RHS is the party committee. Made up of three enthusiastic board members, this trio plans our wonderful parties and large events. We sat down for a chat about what motivates them.

RHS: What sparked your interest in the RHS?



Denise Corcoran: I am fascinated by the rich history of the area and wanted to become involved in an organization where I could lend a hand for a good cause.

Jeff Andrea: My story is similar to Denise’s; my interest was sparked by the history of the town and the beautiful historic homes.

RHS: What in your education and/or background influenced your thinking about history as an adult?

Denise Corcoran: I was an American Studies major in college and was particularly influenced by Howard Zinn’s book *A People’s History of the United States*.

Julie Murphy: For me, it was family-based: my parents took us to Historic Williamsburg, Revolutionary War battle sites, and other historic places. You could say it’s genetic!

RHS: What drew you to the party committee specifically?

Jeff: I became a party of the Party Committee to share my passion for the RHS in a relaxed social atmosphere. It’s important to know your neighbors and people in the community.

RHS: What are your goals for the committee and/or the RHS?

Denise: I’m taking over the Chili Cook-Off and really looking forward to making it the best yet!



Jeff: I want to keep Rowayton a quintessential New England town and that includes preserving the historic homes and landmarks.

Julie: We are so lucky to have such an amazing collection of photos and historic objects at the Pinkney House, I’d love to see more locals come explore this wonderful gem of a museum...there is so much to learn here!



The place to shop to find the perfect gift: The RHS gift shop

Looking for something new and different to give as a hostess or birthday present? Stop by the *half shell*, our gift shop in Pinkney Park, which now features *Seaside Delights*, filled with fun and creative gift ideas, Rowayton-wear, fisherman’s finds, and plenty of new items perfect for the holidays...be sure to stop in! You can also order by email at seasidedelights@gmail.com and pick up your items at the store.

half shell hours:

tuesday - saturday 11 - 3

through the holiday season
or by appointment

seasidedelights@gmail.com

15% of all the half shell’s sales go towards the RHS’ mission to preserve our local history

CONNECTICUT IMPRESSIONIST PAINTINGS

*to be restored and displayed in the
new RHS Front Hall Gallery*

The Historical Society is planning a restoration of the front hall in the Pinkney House. New lighting, fresh paint and furnishings will give pride of place to our wonderful collection of paintings. We are also undertaking the restoration and cleaning of *House Across the River*. As ever, we hope you will join us in supporting these efforts.

*(Left) Artist Leo Dorn painted these two views of the
Rowayton shoreline between 1926-1927.*

*House Across the River by George
Muendel was painted in 1914 and
won first prize in the Wadsworth
Antheneum art show that year.*

*Characterized by uninhibited
brushwork and impressionistic color
schemes Muendel's work was a
forerunner to contemporary artists
such as Wolf Kahn.*



HIGHLIGHTS *of*



Celebrating the Farrell family legacy in Rowayton Fall 2013

James A. Farrell's meteoric rise from the stockroom to Chairman of the Board of U.S. Steel personifies the American success story. Rowayton was a vital component of Mr. Farrell's life almost from the beginning. His affection for Rowayton began during teen-aged summers in a rental house on Bell Island. Once he could afford it, he bought his own summer home on Bluff Avenue. By 1910, the family decided they wanted a more permanent residence here and built their 21+ acre estate Rock Ledge on Highland Avenue, including the carriage house and stables, today Rowayton's Community Center and Library.

Celebrating the Farrell Legacy in Rowayton was a multi-faceted exhibit, told with vintage family photographs, artifacts, and interesting anecdotes, brought to you by the Rowayton Historical Society, the Sixth Taxing District Planning Committee, Rowayton Gardeners, Rowayton Art Center, and Rowayton Library.



RHS Party Fun in 2013

Valentine cocktails for special donors: champagne, and chocolate for some of the RHS' biggest supporters.

Prohibition is Over! Cocktails flapper music, and Louisa Lima's delicious appetizers on the banks of the Five Mile River.

The third Annual RHS Chili Cook-off and Bier Garten: Visitors thronged to Pinkney Park for a delicious afternoon of award-winning chili.

History in your own back yard Rowayton School children visit the RHS

RHS docents welcomed Rowayton School's 4th and 5th grades to Pinkney this spring with an exploration of the industrial development of Norwalk and Greater New England with a program entitled "Rivers, Roads and Rails." Students learned how transportation and industry combined to make our region a manufacturing power house during the 19th and 20th centuries. Renowned Metalsmith Steve Smithers was on hand to demonstrate the skills associated with the art of silver smithing to interested students. A lively and informative day was had by all.



The Pinkney Memorial Garden: Refurbished and replanted after Superstorm Sandy

The Pinkney Memorial Garden was conceived of in the late 1990s and has been enjoyed by hundreds of people over the years, cherished as a beautiful, tranquil escape from the busy world.

Last fall Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc on the newly refurbished 19th-century garden, which was completely under water after surging tides swept through Pinkney Park with record force. Faced with the devastation, Susan Baker, Fiona Pritchard and their dedicated group of volunteers purchased new plants, planted seedlings, and worked hard to bring the garden back to life.

Sandy Nielson, owner of Nielson's Florist in Darien, has also shown her appreciation and support of the garden this year by donating funds to help with the recovery. Volunteers are always welcome to help keep the garden looking its best. If you would like to join the team, or make a donation, please contact the RHS or Susan Baker at susanhuntleybaker@gmail.com.



The American Girl Tea Party June 2013

The American Girl Tea Party continues to be a favorite of young girls and their dolls (and stuffed animals), a group of whom came to Pinkney in early June to enjoy the afternoon. Everyone gathered in the gazebo to listen to children's author Drew Lamm share her book *Anniranni and Molly-mishi, the Wild Haired Doll*, while enjoying cookies and lemonade on the lawn.



History Adorned

Floral Arrangement Inspired by the
Collections of the RHS
March 2013

Over 200 visitors came through the Pinkney House in March to view the spectacular flower arrangements created by the Rowayton Gardeners for this juried show. Participants were inspired by objects in the RHS collection—including such items as a vintage stove, kitchen implements, agricultural and maritime tools, and the staged Parlor and Hearth rooms at Pinkney House. The result was a variety of wonderfully creative arrangements.

RHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Brenda and Rick Pank
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Rowayton Historical Society

P.O. Box 106 177 Rowayton Avenue
Rowayton, CT 06853

Coming Attractions

RHS Holiday Open House

Sunday, December 1st 3-6 pm

Including Brian Kammerer's amazing model trains, an exhibit of a vintage Christmas in Rowayton, and refreshments.

"Light Up Rowayton"

Sunday, December 1st 4:30-6 pm

Join your neighbors at the annual lighting the village for the holiday season at 5:30 pm sharp in Pinkney Park sponsored by the RCA. The Brien McMahon Chamber Choir will perform in front

of the
Pinkney
House
at 5 pm.



2014

EXHIBITS

**Juried Flower Exhibit sponsored by the Rowayton Gardeners
March 2014**

Rowayton and the Purple Crayon: Crockett Johnson, Ruth Krauss and Maurice Sendak and the creative legacy of Rowayton May 2014 – October 2014

LECTURES

Native American Rock Shelter Sites in Fairfield County

By Professor Ernie Weigand, Norwalk Community College

Sunday, January 5, 4 pm. Rowayton Community Center, 33 Highland Avenue, Rowayton. \$5 admission. Free to RHS members.

Life in the Carnegie Mansion

By Heather Ewing, author of "The Lost World of James Smithson: *Science, Revolution, and the Birth of the Smithsonian*" and "Carrere & Hastings: *The Masterworks*."

A look at the house that Andrew Carnegie built in 1902 on "the Highlands of Fifth Avenue." Today home to the Smithsonian's Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum.

February 2014 Rowayton Community Center, 33 Highland Avenue, Rowayton. \$5 admission. Free to RHS members.