



The Rough Writer

The News of the Volunteers at Sagamore Hill

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This newsletter is produced by Milton Elis and the Volunteer Advisory Board for the volunteers and staff of the Sagamore Hill National Historic Site.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

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The Volunteers of Sagamore Hill
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TRIVIA ANSWER



The picture hangs on the north wall of the library under the painting of George Washington.

NEWS FROM THE COAL BIN

By Mark Koziol

ITEMS TEMPORARILY OFF DISPLAY



As you give your tours, you will find certain items are not in their usual places. For example in the Library, Paleolithic Man and Sheridan's Ride are gone. Altogether, twenty-three items have been sent to the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Lowell, Mass. for conservation work. Sent is probably not the best term to use. The items were "shlepped" by Amy Verone and Mark Koziol in the site's van. They made stops in both

Lowell and Andover, Mass. As you can see in the accompanying photo, the book, *Nibelungenlied*, a gift from Kaiser Wilhelm, formerly on the table in the North Room, by itself made for a very large and heavy package.

Although most of the remaining pieces were not on display, a few key items that are also out of the house are the artillery shell vase from the Foyer, the silver water pitcher from the Dining Room, and the bronze Ibex from the mantel in the Gun Room. The complete list of items is on the board in the back room of the TRH.



A SIDE TRIP TO THE HARVARD LIBRARY

While in Massachusetts, Amy and Mark visited the *Houghton Library* of Harvard. Among TR's personal papers stored there, they were able to examine some previously unseen photos of TR taken at Sagamore Hill. In 1905, a cameraman working for the *McFarland Company*, came to Sagamore Hill and photographed TR and his family. Amy requested copies of pictures showing TR rowing on Long Island Sound and of him chopping down a tree.

SETTING THE MAID'S ROOM RECORD STRAIGHT

This information should help you differentiate between the two servants rooms on the south-side of the third floor. According to the *SAHI Furnishing Report*, Mame's Room (the bedroom on the east) was a single bedroom before being divided into two rooms in 1902. The new rooms measured eight feet in width and nineteen feet in length. The near room was occupied by Mame following her retirement as the children's nurse. The far bedroom was occupied by *Katie O'Rourke*, a kitchen maid. The partition was removed by the TRA in 1952 as they prepared the house for viewing by the public.

The Maid's Bedroom (the bedroom on the west) is the largest of the servant's rooms. The room was occupied by *Mary McKenna*, Edith's personal maid, prior to 1910 and then by *Mary Sweeny*, who attended Edith from 1910 until Edith passed away in 1948. According to the *Furnishing Report*, "It is the largest of the servant's quarters and its furnishing reflects the superior status of its occupants."



Chalice in the North Room



Third floor Linen Closet



Cup and saucer with Presidential Seal

SITE NEWS: EVENTS

During the mourning period for the late President *Gerald Ford*, *Josh Reyes*, *Shaun Roche* and *Jesse Ponz* offered a visitor the opportunity to raise the flag and then lower it to half-staff. The young woman was thrilled by the opportunity. The only problem is that the huge flag at half-staff is nearly touching the ground.



SITE NEWS: PEOPLE: The Civil War Roundtable, held in Huntington on January 1, heard the author *William Styple* speak about Civil War themed bronzes. Styple wrote a book about the sculptor *James Kelly*. Kelly did *Crowded Hour* an equestrian bronze of TR. The surprise of the evening was the display of the bronze *Sheridan's Ride* from the TRH. *Sue Sarna* brought the very heavy statuette to the meeting and stood guard over it until it was brought back to the house. For those of you who remember former ranger *John Scotto*, he was present at the event. John is now a tower signalman routing trains for the Long Island Railroad and enjoys the work very much.

A REAL CHALLENGE

This writer recently gave a tour to three hearing impaired individuals. The visitors were completely deaf, didn't read lips and I don't know sign language. Unfortunately, I didn't have a pad or pencil on which to describe what they were seeing. Using hand motions there was some communications. The toughie was explaining that no one was buried under *Quentin's* grave stone by the flag-pole. In the back room, there is now a loose-leaf book with pages patterned after the plaques that had been in front of all the rooms prior to the advent of guided tours. This helps make the site compliant with the **Americans with Disabilities Act**

CURATOR'S ROUNDTABLE DRAWS A FULL HOUSE

Staff, volunteers and one author gathered in the conference room to hear and view a powerpoint presentation prepared by *Shaun Roche*. The presentation on the life and times of *Theodore Roosevelt* was prepared for out-reach programs for schools, libraries, organizations and senior groups. The content of this presentation, to be followed by others, did not delve into specific topics, such as politics, conservation or world affairs. Captions are to be added and an accompanying script will be prepared for the guidance of the presenter. If you are interested in making a presentation, please contact *Charles Markis*. The laptop computer and the projector will be supplied by the site. The next **Roundtable** will be held in March.



THE RAZOR CAME HOME



The traveling shaving implements shown in the accompanying photo had been a gift to TR when he was president. The two canisters are embossed with his initials and the seal of the United States. One canister contains the small shaving brush. The other canister, although empty may have contained a styptic pencil to staunch blood from a shaving nick or perhaps had powder for after-shave use. The two containers for double-edge blades are marked *sharp* and *dull*.

When TR died, *Edith Roosevelt* gave the shaving set to *James Amos*, who had acted as TR's "body-man" or personal assistant, first in the White House and lastly during TR's last illness. Mr. Amos wrote a book about his experiences with TR. The book, long out of print, was titled "Hero to His Valet." The title derived from the French expression, "No man is a hero to his valet." In the latter part of the twentieth

century, the TRA was offered the saving kit, bought it and presented it to the site.

TR TAKES THE BLAME

The following article appeared in the January 2007 edition of the *AARP Bulletin*. Accompanying the article was a picture of TR in uniform.

"Phone Tax Refund- It's About Time

Your 2006 federal income tax return contains a pleasant surprise- the refund of the long-distance telephone tax created to help fund the Spanish-American War. The tax was adopted as a 'luxury' tax in 1898 in the days of *Teddy Roosevelt*, when only wealthy people had telephone service. Federal courts have ruled that the three per cent tax does not apply to long-distance service as it is billed today. However, telephone users will continue to pay federal taxes on local service."

Editor's note: Does this mean that a tax imposed to fund the war in Iraq could be blamed on a service person serving in that area?




DON'T MESS WITH AN HISTORIAN

John Hammond, Chairman of the Friends and Oyster Bay Town Historian pointed out a few errors in last month's article on **Snouder's Drug Store**. During the 1890's the store was known as **Conklin's Drug Store** and was owned by *Andrew Snouder* who had inherited the business from his wife's father, *Abel Conklin*. When Andrew's son, Arthur graduated from pharmacy school in May 1900, the store's name was changed to Snouder's. There was no *Arthur, Jr.* Snouder's was the location of the first telephone in Oyster Bay in 1887. Additional phones arrived after the formation of the Oyster Bay Telephone Company in 1895.

NEWS FROM VOLUNTEER ADVISORY BOARD

The date for the **Volunteer Awards Night** has been set for **Thursday, April 19** at 6:00 p.m. Do not have dinner before you come. Food and desserts will be available. In order to evaluate the Holiday Party, please return the questionnaire that was enclosed in this issue. *Ginny Perrell* would like feedback on whether we remain at the Swan Club or look for another location. Board members will turn out for the public presentation of the **General Management Plan** on **February 1** at the Doubleday-Babcock Senior Center in Oyster Bay. The superintendent asks that all volunteers be alert. If you see something missing or out-of-order at the house or Old Orchard, please advise a member of the staff before there is a problem with the visiting public.

TRIVIA



Question: Where in the TRH does this portrait of *Daniel Boone* hang?

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

The GMP public hearing received a real boost from *Newsday*. Their first section centerfold on Monday, January 29th laid out the salient points of the plan and its hoped for future accomplishments. The February 1st public meeting attendance was greatly affected by this positive publicity. Superintendent *Greg Marshall* will be reporting on the outcome of the meeting in the immediate future.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND LONG RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN: From *Charles Markis*

As we come to the final weeks of adopting our General Management Plan (GMP) for Sagamore Hill, we will begin to direct our attention to creating the Long Range Interpretive Plan that will accompany it. The resulting document will contain the information necessary to tell the story as laid out in the GMP and incorporate our Primary Interpretive Themes developed during 2004- 05 as well as our Park Purpose and significance statements. We are planning to create a useful document with appropriate information that is user friendly. While most of these plans are dense with text we want to use pictures and illustrations to help create a document that everyone will want to use.

Here is a listing of some of the topics for inclusion: Exemplary Tour of the Home, Grounds Walk, Natural History at SAHI Today; Art in the TRH, Mrs. Roosevelt's Sagamore Hill, Sagamore Hill: A Working Farm, Servants and Help, TR: A Life of Public Service: Assemblyman to President, Highlights of TR's Presidency, TR and Conservation, TR as Writer and Author, Panama Canal, TR Adventures and Exploration, TR, Animal Trophies, Boone & Crocket.

There will also be sections relating to development of web-based materials and materials for presentation to school groups as well as off site talks.

One segment that we are developing is our Top Ten List of topics and ideas for TR-iana—what do you think are the ten most important concepts or ideas about TR and Sagamore Hill? We would love to have your list.

Remember that we are focusing on creating a document that will be used by interpreters to tell about Theodore Roosevelt's life at Sagamore Hill, we are not creating a birth to death biography since others have done that so well. If you have ideas or topics for our Long Range Interpretive Plan, please let us know, and send in your top ten.

MANY PROJECTS KEEP PRESERVATION AND MAINTENANCE STAFF BUSY: From *Brian Forseth*

The **Pet Cemetery Path** rehabilitation has been completed. The rehab of the 230-foot path consisted of removing the existing bluestone surface; excavating the existing steel edging from below the surface of the existing path and adjacent lawn; reinstalling the edging to a corrected height; and installing 2,350 square feet of new bluestone (20 cubic yards). A good deal of the work was done by former seasonal employee *Richard Ranc* with an assist from *Rich Althus* and *Bo Stein*.

If you have gone to the basement at the TRH you couldn't help but notice the missing stairwell window and the caution signs. The wooden window and the plaster wall had deteriorated over the years due to water infiltration from leaky gutters. The window and the accompanying storm window will be replaced with a wooden window and storm window fabricated to match the originals. *Dennis Mott* has to follow procedures that require retaining existing materials where possible and if not, replace in kind.



Leaks through the window of the **Cook's Room** should no longer be a problem. The window and storm window have been replaced. It appears that the storm window, which had been made for the house by a contractor many years ago, had an incorrect bottom angle and this permitted the water leakage.



FIRST LECTURE OF THE SERIES

Remember to save the date of the first **Dr. John A. Gable Lecture** of 2007 and plan to support *Amy Verone* the first program is.

Thursday, March 22nd, 7:00 p.m. at Christ Church Parish Hall on Main St., Oyster Bay. *On the Road with Roosevelt* will be presented by Curator *Amy Verone*.

Her power-point presentation will detail TR's 1903 railroad tour of the western part of the United States. During this trip from April to June 16, he stopped at many places such as **Yellowstone National Park** where he dedicated a stone entrance arch, **St. Louis** to dedicate the buildings for the World's Fair and **San Francisco** where TR broke ground for a *William McKinley* statue in Golden Gate Park.