



Shelton History Center CHRONICLE



Winter 2012

Author of Civil War Book to Speak at Annual Meeting

On Sunday, January 29th at 2:00 p.m., author Thomas J. Craughwell will discuss his book, *The Greatest Brigade: How the Irish Brigade Cleared the Way to Victory in the American Civil War* at the Annual Meeting of the Shelton Historical Society. Mr. Craughwell, whose talk will be illustrated, contends that the Irish Brigade helped win the war through their bravery and tactics that included scaring the English out of the war by threatening violence at home. They played a key role in all of the major battles and may have lost the most soldiers of any brigade.

Thomas Craughwell is the author of more than 30 books on religion, history, and popular culture including *Saints Behaving Badly* and *Stealing Lincoln's Body*, which was the basis for a History Channel documentary in 2009. He has written articles for numerous magazines and appeared as a guest on several national media outlets.

The meeting is free, open to the public, and the gourmet cooks who are members of the Shelton Historical Society will serve steaming samples of a variety of delicious soups and desserts. It will be held at the Huntington Congregational Church, 19 Church St. in Shelton.

Members are encouraged to pay their 2012 dues (*see related story on page 3*). There will be a brief business meeting prior to the presentation. Election of officers and directors will take place. Members whose dues are up to date may vote.

The slate is as follows:

President: Martin Coughlin

Secretary: Joyce Donnelly

First Vice President: Joseph Hoefflinger

Assistant Secretary: Arlene Grey

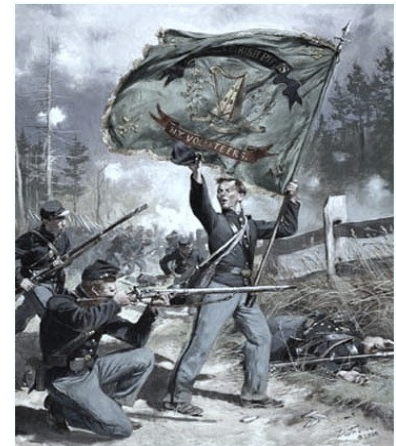
Second Vice President: Sandra Nesteriak

Treasurer: Susan Mauriello

Other members of the Board of Directors are Paula Anthony, Christine Carlson, Cheryl Dziubina, Marc Feeley, Betsy Grant, Carolyn Ivanoff, Kenneth Saranich, and Elizabeth Urso. One position is open.

The staff, Board of Directors, volunteers and members of the Shelton Historical Society extend their sincere gratitude and best wishes to Jim Connery, who has served as treasurer for many years. He will be spending more time as a Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg where he enjoys sharing his passion for Civil War history with visitors to the national historic site in Pennsylvania.

(In case of inclement weather, an announcement regarding postponement will be made on WICC.)



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From the President : Local History

—Marty Coughlin

The late Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neil famously proclaimed that all politics is local. The same can be said about history. Each town or state is shaped by the historical events that give it its uniqueness. Shelton and the Naugatuck river valley are no exceptions. Last fall, I took a bus tour of the upper Naugatuck River and the towns that border the river. The history that lives in those communities embodies the spirit of American independence, its intellectual and entrepreneurial dynamism. Our first law school was located in Litchfield. The rubber and brass industries were born in the Valley. Thomaston is named for Seth Thomas and his clocks and timing devices. Our part of Connecticut was home to military heroes and ambassadors, including the first African-American to be selected to such a post.

I urge all of you to dig into your local history, both here in Shelton and throughout the region. The Historical Society here in Shelton as well as other such groups in the Valley are ready to help you investigate each community. The History Center is a storehouse of information about Shelton's past and our outstanding staff – Tracey, Debbie, and Ellen – are available to assist you as you learn about the history of the community or just of your family. Stop in during the week and look around. We have a number of collection projects that you might find interesting and perhaps want to help us complete.



From the Director: Housekeeping

—Tracey Tate

First and foremost, thank you to all members and friends who have mailed monetary donations in response to the annual appeal request sent in November. Please be assured that we know how to stretch a dollar more than ever during these tough economic times and your support is always appreciated.

As the new year begins the staff of Shelton History Center continues its progress on several time-consuming projects. You may find Ellen, the librarian, sorting manuscripts, Debbie dealing with artifacts, or me scheduling volunteer projects on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, generally 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. With that said, we sometimes attend workshops or meetings and may not be available. We would love to welcome the public any time, so don't hesitate to call to make an appointment; we'll be sure someone is there when it is mutually convenient. Volunteers are needed so that we will be able to open the doors to the public more often when warm weather comes, so if you enjoy sharing your knowledge, give us a call.

The Shelton Historical Society is proud to have been chosen to participate in a program created by the American Association for State and Local History and the Connecticut League of History Organizations with support of the Connecticut Humanities Council. The program is called Steps-CT and will assure that professional standards are met through a series of workshops and assignments. Viability and sustainability of the organization in the future are goals of the curriculum. This is one of the projects that will require our time and take us out of the office on occasional Mondays and Tuesdays during the next two years.

The dining room is being transformed to resemble a 1913 version furnished with golden oak furniture. We are still in need of a glass-fronted china cabinet with straight sides and doors but we are grateful to those who donated some necessary items to furnish the room. Stay tuned!

Did you know that 2012 is the one hundredth anniversary of the Girl Scouts in this country? Did you know that in addition to school groups we offer programs for Scouts, both boys and girls? Recently some young ladies earned their Local Lore badge at our facility and offered their thoughts below and on page 4 :

On October 7th my Girl Scout troop 60828 visited your museum. Even though Lauren (a fellow girl scout) and I have been going to summer camp for the past 3 years, we were still amazed with all the old artifacts. When we first walked into the school house it felt like we had walked into a time machine. It was so quiet we could hear a pin drip because we were so interested in what the historians said. I was impressed that a lot of the buildings had actually been moved from different areas of Shelton.

Natalie Klimaszewski

A few weeks ago I went to the historical society. It was almost like I went back in time. I found it inter-



BULLETIN

A Page to Save



Connections: Membership News and Events – Cheryl Dziubina & Beth Urso

As many of you know, this year's Annual Meeting is to be held at the Huntington Congregational Church on January 29, 2012 - 2:00pm – 4:30pm

Share the afternoon with your fellow history lovers, learn about the exciting journeys of the "The Greatest Brigade" through the Civil War, meet and greet your fellow members and share your thoughts with us in order to help us grow our membership! This year's membership committee is looking forward to reaching out to all of you and along with your help - put in place some of your ideas that have been shared with us by holding some additional events to bring us all together throughout the year. Of course many of these ideas take planning, coordination and assistance so we need all of you to help out whenever you can! Let us know how you want to volunteer so we can develop new programs that are fun for all!

The Annual Meeting is a well-attended event and tastefully supported by our members and friends alike. Come and taste the heartwarming soups prepared by several of our own, whom we would like to thank for sharing their recipes with us! Please give the office a call should you also care to prepare and share one of your recipes at the event.

Please be sure to check in at the Membership table in order to assist us in maintaining your information we have on file. And please be sure to let us know how you can participate this year. Our deepest thanks go out to our staff, volunteers and The Board of Directors — because without your support and continued efforts, none of the upcoming year's events would be possible. Here's To You All!

For your convenience, we will be collecting the 2012 dues at the Annual Meeting (cash or check.) – or you can send in your dues via the membership form always included on the back page of the Shelton History Center newsletter.

Membership dues remain unchanged for 2012 and will now be on a Calendar year basis.

Individual Membership	\$ 20.00
Family Membership	\$ 30.00
Business Membership	\$ 50.00

On behalf of the 2012 Membership Committee, we look forward to seeing you all at the Annual Meeting!

Cheryl Dziubina
203-929-1797

Beth Urso
203-984-4599

Wish List

*These donations always help!
Drop them off in the office or in the
tub by the office door.*

- Still looking for galvanized tubs and buckets, any size or condition!
- Tension rods 36" need 8
- Fels naptha soap bars
- Potting soil
- 2" peat pots no hole
- Jumbo craft sticks
- Smarties candy
- Library style book ends
- Shredder
- Paper towels
- Tall kitchen trash bags

SHELTON READING CIRCLE

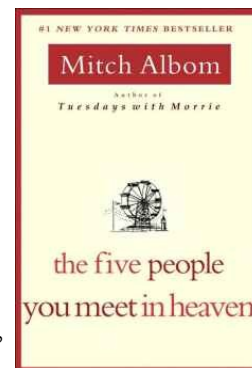
Meet the first Tuesday of each month from 7–8:30pm at the:
Huntington Branch Library
41 Church St
Shelton CT, 06484
(203) 926-0111

It's free and open to the public. In general, books tend to have an historical theme.

Consider joining us! Books are available at the Plumb Memorial Library reserve shelf.

February 14– *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom

Call Ellen Kolesk at The Shelton History Center (203)925-1803 for more information.



Girl Scouts *con't from page 2*

esting in the school house and learning how students worked there. I learned about the outhouse and that the moon on the side of it means a girl and the star means a boy. I was fascinated by the transportation to school. How did people do that? It is amazing how you can make a long time ago seem so real today. Dylan Johnson

Going to the historical society felt like a back in time adventure. We got to learn about the past which to my surprise wasn't boring at all. We got to go in the school house too. All of the historians were very nice. Sarah Gloria

I really enjoyed going to your history center. I found that even after going there for the past 3 summers, I still had not known everything about it. I was so impressed with all of the old artifacts and I loved being able to go into the house. It was a great experience. Thank you. Lauren Wokanovicz

Do you have time to volunteer to help present programs such as these to the community? You'll make mine a Happy New Year if you do!



NOT A MEMBER YET?

Join Our Gang!

Membership in the Shelton Historical Society

Your financial support through membership in our organization is greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in becoming a member to support our missions and programs, please send completed form with a check payable to: **Shelton Historical Society, Inc. P.O. Box 2155 Shelton CT 06484**

Shelton Historical Society is a 501 (c) (3) Non-profit organization

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

New Membership: _____ Renewal Membership: _____

Business Membership: \$50.00 _____ Family Membership: \$30.00 _____ (Number in family _____) Individual: \$20.00 _____
_____ I would like to help Shelton Historical Society save postage costs by receiving notices and the newsletter via email.
_____ I prefer traditional mail.

Would you like to know about our Volunteer opportunities? _____
Ask your company about their matching program and submit the information to us to match your Membership and other Contributions.

A Behind the Scenes Look

In the epilogue of her book, *Lost in the Museum*, Nancy Moses summarizes the behind-the-scenes lessons she learned from her experiences as curator and director of various facilities. Excerpts below:

The first lesson is that every collecting institution is itself an artifact with a singular story to tell. Each museum, special collections library, historical society, and archive is born at a specific moment in time, reacts to specific challenges and opportunities, deals with its collections, and connects with its communities in different, often idiosyncratic ways. All follow an evolutionary path that mirrors the path of society. Earnest amateurs founded most museums. Over time, in response to society's evolving needs and values, these institutions morphed into an international mega-cultural industry where public entertainment is almost as important as public education, and where armies of professionals now stand in the places where a few amateurs once stood.

How collecting institutions respond to the ever changing American landscape leads to the second lesson. These places are very tough to manage and even tougher to change. They move at a snail's pace that appears glacial to those in the private sector, but for good reason. It's very tricky to balance competing missions, and trickier still to start something new when there are so few dollars and thus so little room for error. Every day in a museum director's life brings another wrenching choice, for there's never enough money to simultaneously satisfy every priority, to do everything right.

The third lesson gets to these priorities. What's most important: exhibits or collections? If you believe in the intrinsic, civic value of collecting institutions, there's really no choice. Collections must come first—the bones and birds, diaries and documents, creations of master and minor artists, relics, charms, talismans, souvenirs, specimens, and heirlooms. This stuff is the stuff of the scholarship, science, and exhibitions of the future. Preserving it for posterity is the most important thing collecting institutions do.

Whether it's the family portrait hanging in your parlor or the extinct species lying in a drawer in a museum's storage cabinet, the objects we save are touchstones; they tell us who we are. Objects bring forward our personal memories and bind them to the larger story of society. By saving the stuff lost in the museum, we allow future scholars, curators, and visitors to explore themselves in relation to their material heritage. Each succeeding generation brings their own questions and fresh perspectives. Marginal artists are rediscovered and celebrated; specimens are reexamined and new species emerge; segments of society once hidden from view are revealed and celebrated. Years ago, no one would have imagined that today's historians would search archives for clues to the roles that gays and lesbians played in society. But they do. And they couldn't unless past archivists saved the documents.

There are too many treasures buried in the crypts, but they do not have to remain hidden. Many institutions are finding imaginative ways to bring more of their stuff to public view. The most exciting one is the Internet. Some are offering behind-the-scenes tours. Others are building open storage areas, shelves lined with objects behind walls of glass, so visitors can walk by and view them in situ.

These efforts are critically important. There's no other way to convince the public to invest in preservation of the 630 million items that Heritage Preservation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services found in need of immediate care. Studies like these help collecting institutions reveal their massive hidden holdings and justify the costs of preserving them. People don't give to causes they can't see.

Which brings me to the final lesson: Every collecting institution, regardless of size, type, age, or collecting practice, is a storehouse of stories just waiting to be told. Unlock the doors and share the stuff. Collecting institutions are their stewards, but the stuff belongs to all of us. It's our legacy, the soul of our society.

This year we will schedule **Behind the Scenes Tours for members** of the Shelton Historical Society so that you will understand the work we do and the challenges we face. These tours will be opportunities to show you the extra special but fragile items in our collections such as the 1700's poke bonnet and work dress of many patches saved from the mid-nineteenth century! Visit our Web site www.sheltonhistoricalsociety.org for announcements of these special programs.

Shelton Historical Society

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*To study the flow of common
life is to discover the electricity
of history.*

Please visit our Website: www.sheltonhistoricalsociety.org

QUILTERS WANTED

PLEASE RESPOND BY JANUARY 31, 2012



It's not too late to get involved in the creation of our Civil War inspired quilt. Volunteer quilters are needed to participate — whether you are an expert quilter or someone who wants to learn the craft—please get in touch and we can share in the delight of creating this masterpiece together. The finished quilt will be used in one of our future fundraising events.

Pass this along to family, friends, and any known quilter! If you know someone who is good at teaching the hand-piece method of quilting and think they would be interested in helping out, please have them give me a call!

I need to hear from you—All interested please call Beth Urso at 203.984.4599 or email at jnburso@sbcglobal.net.