

Mathews Historical Museum Newsletter

Travel Through Time in Mathews

Volume 2, Number 1 • January 2020

www.mathewsvmuseum.org



The Mathews Historical Museum, 200 Main Street, Mathews, Virginia.

From our chairman, John A. Caramia Jr.

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and wish you all a prosperous New Year. As we enter 2020 I would like to look back at the Museum's accomplishments during 2019 and then look forward to the coming New Year. At the beginning of the year we moved our archeological exhibit that had been in the James Store to the Museum. During the spring we continued improving our Web Site and Facebook page. We hope that you view them periodically because we use them to continually update our events and other Museum related activities. We introduced a new Membership Brochure and adopted a comprehensive Collection Policy.

Much of our time and energy was spent on planning May Faire, our major yearly fundraising event. May Faire celebrates Mathews County's

past by focusing on a different historic theme each year. The theme in 2019 was a Salute to the Military. As part of the celebration we installed in the Museum a Wall of Remembrance with 850 photographs of men and women from Mathews County who served in the military from the War of 1812 to our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Over 350 visitors viewed the exhibit during May Faire. The Wall of Remembrance is still up and can be seen whenever the museum is open. In addition the conversations with our World War II veterans, held at the historic Court House, were videotaped and can be seen on You Tube.

During the fall the museum was open on several weekends including Market Days in September. We had an antique sale as part of Autumn on Main Street in October. We were open on
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OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: John A. Caramia, Jr.
Treasurer: Vicki Carter
Vice President: Edith Turner
Secretary: Elsa Verbyla

CLASS OF 2019:

Barbara Bass
John A. Caramia Jr.
Josie Thorpe
Nancy H. Twigg
Elsa Verbyla

CLASS OF 2020:

Alexis Foster
Tom Karow
Forrest Morgan
Cindy Roman
Doug Wilton

CLASS OF 2021:

Gaylen Davis
Katherine Davis Small
Jim Pavik
Edith Turner
Sandy Warhol

CALENDAR 2020

Jan. 20, May Faire Committee meeting, 4 p.m. at the museum, volunteers welcome.

Jan. 27, Museum Annual Meeting, 6 p.m., at the museum. Refreshments served. Public is welcome.

March 16, St. Patrick's Day dinner at Kingston Parish House.

May 2, May Faire, "Celebrating Our Mathews Water Heritage" all day on the Court Green. Conversations with local watermen, 11 a.m. in the historic courthouse.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN
(Continued from the prior page)

November 9th in celebration of Veterans' Day giving visitors a chance to see the Wall of Remembrance. On December 13th and 14th we had a Christmas Bazaar, with 21 different vendors set up in the museum.

In addition to our fundraising events and activities in the museum our other major project has been developing plans for the renovation and restoration of the building so that it meets museum standards. We have been working with Commonwealth Preservation Group (CPG) to help develop a preservation plan, space usage within the building and documents that can be used for a capital campaign. We are currently reviewing a draft of the new membership brochure that introduces the capital campaign. Early in 2020 CPG will present draft plans and other material that will be used during the campaign. During the spring we will introduce these ideas to our membership and other interested people to get their input and help in raising the necessary funds for the restoration, preservation of the building and the development and installation of museum exhibits. As I indicated in our 2018 Annual meeting it will take at least 5 years or more to have the

museum ready to open on a regular basis.

Be sure to mark your calendar for these following events in 2020:

- January 27th – Mathews Historical Museum Annual Meeting which will be held at the Museum at 6:00 PM.
- March 16th – St. Patrick's Day Dinner to be held at Kingston Parish House with proceeds supporting the Museum.
- May 2nd – May Faire, Celebrating Our Mathews Water Heritage.

I thank each of you for your interest in the museum and your support of our events and activities. If you are not already a member we hope that you will consider becoming a member. If you are a member we hope that you will renew your membership for 2020.

In closing I would like to thank the board members for all of their hard work in helping the museum develop. And I thank all of the volunteers who have helped make May Faire and the other museum events successful. Without their hard work we would not have accomplished all that have been able to do.

Museum Names New Board Members

Two additions to our Museum Board of Directors, beginning their service in 2020, are local community leaders Gregg Faulkner and Steven Forrest.

Gregg Faulkner was born and raised in Mathews County. Career opportunities took him to North Carolina, where he became an ordained minister. He was asked to return to Mathews County to run the three Funeral Homes/Cremation services that bear his name in Mathews and Middlesex Counties. His background has much to offer the Mathews Historical Museum Board and he is committed to assisting the board to the extent his busy schedule permits. As an ordained minister, he frequently preaches as visiting minister on Sundays at churches in the area.



Gregg Faulkner

Dr. Steven A. Forrest, Sr. is the founder and

former Senior Pastor of New Creation Ministries in Mathews County. He is founder and Apostle/Pastor of Kingdom Covenant Ministries, Inc., in Mathews County. He is former board member of Five Rivers Continuum of Care for King William County and former director of the board for Habitat for Humanity in Gloucester and Mathews Counties. In January 2018, he founded Kingdom Covenant Ministries, Inc, a nondenominational Training Church in Cobbs Creek. He has ministered in several different jails and prisons throughout the Commonwealth. He and his wife Antichella have a beautiful blended family.



Dr. Steven A. Forrest, Sr.

These new board members will be introduced at the Annual Meeting on January 27. Come and meet them and hear about plans for the coming year!

Museum Membership

If you are a member we hope you will renew your membership for 2020. Yearly memberships run from January 1 through December 31. There is a membership form at the end of this newsletter. Your membership provides vital support to the mission of the museum. If you became a member this past fall your membership will continue through 2020.

For a Special Birthday Gift, Recognition, or in Memoriam

As we move forward in developing our Museum, there are opportunities for giving. We ask that you consider recognizing a loved one in a very special way. Become part of our history by making a donation to the Mathews Historical Museum. Your donations can be designated for general operations of the museum or to the Capital Campaign to be used for the restoration and preservation of the building and for museum exhibits.

Brenda Ripley to Chair “Conversations” Featuring Mathews Watermen

May Faire 2020 will provide an overview of our county’s water legacy through the eyes and memories of our own watermen at an event to be held in the historic courthouse at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 2. “Conversations with Watermen” will be chaired by

Mathews native, Brenda Ripley, a descendant of a historic line of watermen. The Conversations segment will include all aspects of watermen’s activities.

“We hope to have a diverse dais of watermen, to achieve multiple generations of some of our Mathews families, focusing on what these watermen did—oystering, clamming, crabbing and fishing,” said Ripley.

At an organizational meeting at the museum, Ripley called for launching an effort to gather names of watermen and outlined a plan for acquiring photographs and stories of our watermen so that a database can be created for use in the Museum.

Museum chair John Caramia said, “From a museum perspective, this appears to be the first event of its kind. The museum will focus on this as part of life of our community. The museum is dedicated to celebrating the County’s heritage in a way that the community can enjoy with friends and family, while reflecting on the past. We look forward to working with the community in gathering the necessary information. Requirements for submitting information will be announced soon on our website.”



Brenda Ripley, left, discusses plans for Conversations with Watermen with, from left, May Faire co-chair Cindy Roman, museum chairman John A. Caramia Jr., and May Faire chair Jo Schramm.

Museum Seeks History Through Photos and Stories of its Watermen

The museum invites submission of photographs and stories to become part of a database of Mathews watermen maintained by the museum. We ask that you delve into your family’s history, as far back as you are able, to provide names and photographs in this suggested format:

Name _____
Phone _____
Type of water activity _____

Please tell us of your employer (if employed), the waters you travelled, any outstanding story or experience,

the years you did it, and any additional information you would like to share.

Send in your photos electronically to may-fairemathews@gmail.com. Please submit any stories you would like to share. If you would like to be photographed and interviewed, please submit a request, and we will try to accommodate you or answer your questions.

Please check our website, www.mathewsvmuseum.org, as we post additional information. We ask that you circulate this request to friends and neighbors.

Christmas at the Museum



Mairi Furniss sells Scottish shortbread at the Museum's Christmas Bazaar.

Museum Hosts First Christmas Bazaar

Over the December 13-14 weekend, twenty-one area vendors came to the Museum to set up shop and sell their wares. Ranging from plum pudding to jewelry to children's furniture to artwork and antiques, shoppers could find it all! Co-chairs Barbara Bass and Cindy Roman reported that the vendors were quite pleased with their foot traffic, despite a slow bad-weather start on Friday. The day of Santa's arrival produced visitors who streamed through the Museum helping to boost the County's economy (see article, Mathews Museum contributes to County's Economic Growth).

Mathews School Children Add to the Holiday Spirit!

The children's art show was a tribute to our county's school system. Kudos go to board member Barbara



Mrs. Claus draws the winning name in the Sweetheart basket raffle.

Bass who worked with art teacher Vanessa Fry to invite students to complete a Christmas scene. Over 350 students participated and their art was displayed in the Museum during the Christmas Bazaar.

Winners were:

from Lee-Jackson, first place, Carter Hayes, second place, Eloise Leslie; third place, Maya Schroder.

from Thomas Hunter, first place, Matthew Williams, second place, Kaytlyn Ball, and third place, Peyton West.

A Sweetheart Basket

The Sweetheart Raffle Basket Winner, a \$500+ value, was won by Mathews residents, Paul and Rachel Vanden Bout. The basket contained several gift certificates and lovely items donated by our wonderful local businesses. We support our local businesses as the revenues stay in our community.

Over Veterans Day Weekend

Visitors were welcomed at the Museum on Saturday, November 9, in honor of Veterans Day. Visitors and family members were invited to inspect the "The Wall of Remembrance" which was unveiled at May Faire 2019 as part of the celebration honoring Mathews County residents who served and now serve. The "wall" is a display of over 850 images of those county residents who have served through the centuries in the military. According to Museum Chair, John Caramia, the display will remain in place indefinitely. Please check our website to see which days the museum will be open, and come by and visit!

May Faire 2020 Moves Forward with Organizational Meeting

May Faire 2020 Chair Jo Schramm reports that plans are coalescing around the 2020 theme, “Celebrating Our Mathews Water Heritage.” This year’s theme will be a tribute to those county residents who worked in the past and now work on the water: the oystermen, fishermen, crabbers and clammers. Schramm is leading a team of nearly 20 volunteers who are the backbone of May Faire operations. Volunteers are welcome and may contact Jo at mayfairemathews@gmail.org The first meeting will be held Monday, January 20, 4 p.m., at the Museum. All are welcome to participate.

Committee chairs are:

- *Vendors/Advertising: Barbara Bass
- *Program for the day: Edith Turner
- *Retail: Cindy Roman
- *Marketing/PR: Sandy Warhol, Paul Hyer
- *Souvenir program: Elsa Verbyla, John Caramia
- *Raffle: Lisa Provensen

Upcoming events at the museum

Annual Meeting

The Mathews Historical Museum will hold its annual meeting, open to the public, at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 27 at the museum. Guests will hear plans in store for future growth, future displays, collections, recent acquisitions, and more. Delicious refreshments will be served. All are welcome.

Mathews Chamber of Commerce

For a portion of 2020, the Museum will provide meeting space to the recently formed Mathews County Chamber of Commerce for breakfast Board meetings. The Museum is pleased to be able to accommodate guests for their respective group meetings and has joined the Chamber as a member. We support economic growth in our community!



We are pleased to report that the Bayside Youth Ballet will return to perform its May Pole dance during May Faire. This group has supported our festival since the first year, 2017. Here is their performance in 2019.



ST. PATRICK'S DINNER

Lucky for all that we are hosting a St. Patrick's Day dinner as a fundraiser for the museum on Monday, March 16 at Kingston Parish Hall, 370 Main Street, Mathews, starting at 6 p.m.

The evening starts at 6 p.m. with traditional corned beef and cabbage fixings, Irish music, dancing lassies, costumed carvers and a wee bit of spirits for consumption. Limited seating! Sponsorships available.

SAVE THE DATE!

For more information call 804-725-3862.



Winning Christmas artworks were displayed at the Mathews Historical Museum. Winning works by Thomas Hunter Middle School students are shown, left from top, by Matthew Williams, Kaytlyn Ball and Peyton West; from Lee-Jackson Elementary School, right from top, Carter Hayes, Eloise Lester and Maya Schroder.

Mathews Historical Museum contributes to county's economic growth

A recent press release from Executive Director Emily Allen of the Mathews County Visitor and Information Center, reports that tourism revenue in Mathews County increased 2.8% between 2017 and 2018, doubling the revenue growth of the prior 12 months. The Gazette-Journal reported: "Tourism revenue increases in Mathews," and went on to say that new tourism was observed in multiple sectors, including "boutique housing" and new restaurants.

Also cited in the article, "The Mathews Historical Museum...contributed to tourism growth, along with such seasonal events as May Faire."

The upcoming May Faire 2020 will be the 4th annual heritage spring festival and is the fundraising arm of the Museum which annually raises funds to help sustain the museum. In each of the past three years of operating May Faire, revenues have increased significantly.



Mathews Historical Museum

Membership Application

(2020)

Become a Member of Mathews Historical Museum

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

I am interested in the following membership:

_____ Individual, \$25, per year

_____ Family / Couple, \$35 per year

_____ Active Duty Military, \$15 per year

_____ Student (under 18), FREE

_____ Lifetime Membership, \$500

I would like to make an Additional gift to support the work of the Museum in the amount of: _____

I am interested in participating in the following activities:

_____ Collections _____ Special Events _____ Retail

_____ Membership _____ Fundraising / Grant Writing

_____ Other (please state)

We will contact you with regard to your interests. Thank you.

Thanks you for your interest and support of the Mathews Historic Museum. Please make check payable to Mathews Historical Museum and submit along with this application to Membership Chair / Mathews Historical Museum / P. O. Box 634 / Mathews, VA 23109.