

Stories of the old days prompt more memories of past

The recent story in this column about the historical society meeting at which senior citizens told about the old days has really brought forth interesting mail and phone calls! I received a letter from a former Newmarket resident, Amelia Descheneau, now of Rochester, and her nostalgic contribution is so heartwarming that I couldn't improve on it, so I'm quoting from her letter:

"Have read all about the senior citizens' stories about old times. Do have someone tell you about the 'Newmarket Park,' where swings and seesaws were plentiful. There was also a pavilion for Saturday night dancing and a ball team the Newmarket Mills had, with Bud Fisher as pitcher, and Ed Fontaine as catcher. That team was hard to beat. The baseball grounds were packed every Saturday and Sunday and often during the week, too.

"Also, have someone tell you about the Newmarket Club where anyone could learn sewing, basket-weaving, millinery was also run by the Newmarket Mills.

"I remember when I was about eight years old, I used to go around with the district nurse, a Miss Wentworth, who would visit all the homes that wanted her. I went because I could speak French and also a little Polish. When we finished our rounds, I would help Mary Mathes, the librarian, shell peas, wash dishes and dust.

On nights when there was a band concert, the streets would be jammed with people who knew each other and greeted one another. My father, Napoleon St. Laurent, was band leader for 35 years

I thought my readers would find this letter as charming as I did, and no doubt there are many who remember Mrs. Descheneau and the things she speaks of. If so, let me hear from you!

Another bit of information, also triggered by that article, comes from Mrs. Peter Hamel, one of my neighbors on Ash Swamp Road. She recalls that there was once a school in the front room of her house! (I don't think anyone mentioned that school!)

The former owners of the Hamel farm, who are buried in an old family graveyard on the property, were Clarence and Annie (Pendergast) Slate. Mrs. Slate's daughter, Annie Hood, who passed away in 1953, had mentioned to Mrs. Hamel that her mother had started first grade in a school in the farm's front room. This would have been around 1865, as Mrs. Slate was born in 1860.

Mrs. Hamel also came up with another fascinating item: a family register that begins with one Henry Watson who was born in Newmarket in 1768. He married Nancy Smart, also born in Newmarket in 1763 and they had nine offspring; one of whom married a Dearborn, one a Joy, one a Chapman, and one a Wilson. All are old family names around here, so maybe some of you are descendants! Let me know if you are. This is turning into a regular chain reaction!

The Newmarket Senior Citizens met Wednesday, May 2, at the Community Church, with 53 members

present. The group welcomed one new member, Norma Szabo, and two visitors, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Howe, all of Newmarket.

After the business meeting, Mrs. June Lessard of the Hampton Monday Club spoke to the group about the 'Vial Of Life' program. The group will consider the program at the next meeting.

Following this discussion, Richard and Priscilla Schanda took the group on a tour of Czechoslovakia and Germany with slides of their trip there last fall. The Schandas visited the home of Richard's father in Tuscovoh, Czechoslovakia, and then went on to see relatives in Germany and Austria. They treated the group to scenic views of those countries, plus an interesting narration.

The program committee had set a pretty table with spring flowers, and as a festive touch, had made cookies, cake, tea and coffee, and little May baskets filled with candy and peanuts.

Members are reminded of the upcoming trip to Quincy Market in Boston on June 5, rain date June 7. The bus will leave at 8:15 a.m. from the street entrance of Great Hill Terrace (please note, not from the Community Center!) at 8:30 a.m. from St. Mary's and at 8:30 a.m. from the high school parking lot.

The next regular meeting will be at 10 a.m. on June 6 at the Community Church. The group will then adjourn for the summer, but this doesn't mean that they won't be active, just that there won't be formal meetings until September. By the time you read this, they'll be off on their trip to the Smokey Mountains and next time I hope to have the story of that adventure for you!

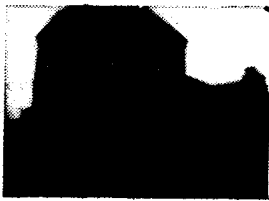
The Friendly Club met last week at the home of Gertrude Hauschel on Ash Swamp Road with Estella Waugh as hostess. The meeting opened with the club prayer that was composed by club members when the group was founded. Each of the original members brought in a line and the lines were assembled to form the prayer.

Old business was discussed and reports were read and accepted. The June luncheon outing came up for lengthy discussion, and after numerous suggestions, members decided to go to Hector's in Rye.

Following the adjournment of the business meeting, refreshments, featuring angel-food cake with strawberries and whipped cream, tea and coffee, were served in the dining-room by Mrs. Waugh and Mrs. Hauschel. The mystery package (a package of note paper) was won by Myra Sewall. Laura Sewall was the winner of the booby prize, but this booby prize was a good one — a jar of jam.

The third and final Forum in the Newmarket Service Clubs "Newmarket Revisited" project will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 24 at the library. Entitled "Looking At Tomorrow," the meeting will focus on Newmarket's options for the future. Results of the two previous forums will be reported and analyzed by Robert Thoreson, planning consultant, who will lead a discussion using data gathered about Newmarket over the past several months.

Before and after the meeting, Newmarket residents will have an opportunity to review data on property in the down-



Newmarket

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town area. The meeting itself will provide an opportunity to review, comment on, and perhaps add to or correct the cultural resources inventory of over 100 buildings.

The Newmarket Revisited/Historical Preservation display entitled "A Look At Newmarket's Past; A Foundation For The Future" is on display at the Indian Head Bank on Main Street; other merchants or organizations that would like to show the exhibit may contact Dave Halloran, Service Club president, or any member of the revitalization committee of Service Club.

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A reminder: don't forget your animals this spring. This is the season for rabies and distemper boosters and for heartworm. Remember not to give your dog heartworm medication until you have had him tested first. The mosquitoes are out, so get right to it. Give your pet every chance to stay healthy. My two dogs, Smokey, the black Lab, and Bobby, the Heinz 57, say, "If you love 'em, do it now!"

The "Tiny Tot" program has openings for one-, two-, and three-year-olds. The free class meets from 9:30-11:30 Thursdays at the town hall.

Women's softball will start soon and everyone's welcome to join, so check this one too! The Community Church Senior Citizens meet from 2-4 p.m. Mondays for refreshments and exercise; no charge.

Jazz-dance classes are from 6-7:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at the town hall.

Bonnie Prudden fitness classes are from 7-8:15 Mondays at the high school.

Preschool recreation classes are from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesdays at the town hall.

Children's gym classes are from 1-2 p.m. and children's jazz-dance class from 2:30-4 p.m. Thursdays at the town hall. Ballroom-dance classes meet from 8-9 p.m. also on Thursdays at St. Mary's school hall.

Baton classes are from 3-4 p.m. Fridays at St. Mary's.

If you are interested in taking a class or forming a club, call Lesley Smith at 659-3073.