

STETSON PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



February – March 2012

Stetson's Community Newsletter since 1988

Selectmen's Corner

Submitted by: Don Carroll

Well, the great fall and early winter weather seems to have come to an end and winter has arrived. So all is well with the skiers, ice fishermen, snowmobilers, etc., however, not so good for fuel consumption. If you have a problem obtaining fuel please call the town office and we will do our best to help you or point you to people who can. Also in case of emergency, i.e.: major snow storms, power outages for long periods of time etc., the Meeting House basement is equipped as an emergency shelter with a large generator for heat and lights. Also there is food, cots and blankets available. Hopefully we won't need it, but remember it's there if we do.

Moving to another subject, Jim Ricker, the Town Manager of Newport, has made available to Stetson residents, the use of Newport's transfer station for bulky waste disposal, such as TV's, monitors, white goods, tires, sofas and so on. For those of you who don't want to hang on to this stuff until our annual collection of the same, this is a great alternative. We are enclosing a list of acceptable items and fees. The facility is located on the Ridge Rd. in Newport, just past the bridge on the right going toward Plymouth. You must show proof of Stetson residency. Credit and Debit cards are not acceptable.

We would like to send out a big thank you to the residents and staff of the Stetson Ranch for the free dinner they prepared and served at the Meeting House on December 22nd. The turnout was not that great, but the food was excellent! Hopefully they will try it again with a little more notice and not as close to a major holiday. These folks would like to have more involvement with our community, so let's do what we can to help them achieve this goal. For the most part, these young people have gone through some major bumps on their road to adulthood and can use whatever help we can offer. So once again thanks for the dinner and please give us a chance.

The Select board will be holding budget works shops for Fiscal Year 2013 on the First and Third Wednesday of February at 6:00PM at the Town Office. The public is welcome and limited input will be welcome.

I know it's a little early, but by the time the next newsletter is published, it will be one position to be filled on the Select Board, Road Commissioner, and one School Director. Nomination papers will be available on March 19, 2012, with a return date of April 27, 2012. That's probably all the information needed at this time if you wish to mark your calendars. The election will be held Tuesday June 12, 2012 and the Town meeting will be Saturday June 16, 2012.

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and stay safe and warm in pursuit of your winter endeavors.

Sincerely, Don Carroll
Chairman of the Board of Selectmen

Stetson Historical Society

Submitted by: Brenda Clark

Things are pretty quiet since our next meeting is not until April.

Julie has started scanning several old scrapbooks that are in very poor condition. In their present state, they are too fragile to handle and it gives her something to keep her mind occupied.

We still have a few 2012 calendars at the library and town office.

Stetson Public Library

Submitted by: Amy Butler

Did you know that the library has:

- * Free Wireless
- *Free Tickets to Children's Museum
- *Bestsellers
- *Free Tickets to Maine Botanical Gardens
- *Free Ancestry Access
- *DVDs
- *A Warm and friendly atmosphere with local volunteers

The Stetson Public Library is looking for volunteers!! If you love to read and are willing to donate a couple hours a week, or just a month please stop by and learn more.

The Library website now has a new look!! Go to www.stetson.lib.me.us for links to ancestry, calender events at the Children's Museum and Botanical Gardens.

Coming soon to the Library near you:

Explosive Eighteen

War Horse

Prime #1 Suspect

Unbroken

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close

Kill Alex Cross

by Janet Evanovich

by Michael Morpurgo

by James Patterson and Maxine Paetro

by Laura Hillenbrand

by Jonathan Safran Foer

by James Patterson

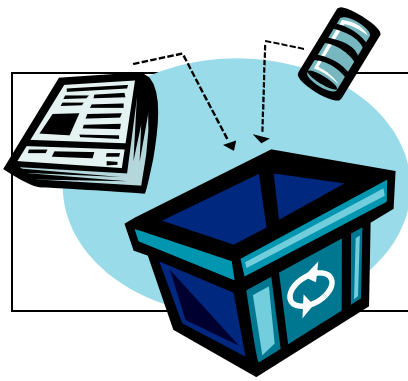


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can now be accessed by visiting the town webpage:

www.stetsonmaine.net



Roadside Recycle Dates

2nd Tuesday of the Month

February 14th March 13th

Pleasant Lake Fishing Derby

Submitted by: Terry White

**14th Annual Pleasant Lake Fishing Derby
Saturday February 18, 2012**



To benefit Howard Lodge Square & Compass Club. Tickets can be purchased at Stetson Pond Bait Shop on the Cross Rd or the day of the derby at White's Camp. All proceeds to benefit Howard Lodge Square & Compass Club. For information contact Terry White, Derby Chairman at 296-2929.

Cash prizes for Bass and Pickerel!

**February 18th is State of Maine
FREE FISHING DAY
- NO FISHING LICENSE REQUIRED* -**

* Free fishing days will take place on February 18 & 19, 2012, and June 2 & 3, 2012. On these days, any person (except those whose license has been suspended or revoked) may fish without a license. All other laws and regulations apply on these days. (source: Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife)

History of Stetson, Maine

Submitted by: Charles Leighton

The following article continues the series about the early history of the town of Stetson. Information contained was gleaned from early town and county records and resident recollections, plus highlights from "History of Stetson, Maine (1800-1931)" by Lilla Woods Daniels.

Early history No. 28 – part 4

It is only natural that the rural 19th century (1800's) educational system and mind set was totally different than today. The agrarian (farming) way of life depended on having a large family to help with manual labor, but also to offset an all too frequent loss of young children to the many diseases or afflictions home remedies could not cure. Even if a doctor was close by, they often could do little more than what had been done at home. The parent's primary concern was to feed, clothe, and have adequate housing to sustain such large households. Schooling was not a high priority, since manual labor in the home and on the farm would most likely be a girl or boys lot in life.

One thing I have only touched on lightly in the three previous parts was how sparsely early one room schools were furnished and what learning or teaching tools were available. Until about 1875, most scholars had wooden benches and small tables (all locally made) to work on. Paper was a luxury and expensive, so most individuals class work (reading, writing, and arithmetic) was done on a piece of slate and chalk, if available, but a pine board painted black would also work in a pinch. If they were real fortunate, a wall map and/or world globe would complete the décor. Very crude by today's standards.

Text books were often outdated, in very poor condition, and with a limited supply. What books they did have stayed in the school building. One thing a current student might envy; there was little or no homework.

The room was heated by a large wood burning heater stove with a flat top. In the early days, it was often part of the teacher's duties to start the fire early in the morning and keep it going during the day. When a good fire was going, it took some of the chill off, but with only a plastered wall inside, drafty windows, and no insulations, scholars would often keep their outdoor clothes on all day. For this reason, the town would sometimes vote to have only a longer spring, summer, and fall session; but if the winter proved to be exceptionally mild, to re-open some district schools for a few weeks.

Water for drinking was in a pail with a "community" dipper for everyone to use. Some kids did have their own cup, but most did not. People now-a-days sometimes wonder how any kid could have survived their school years.

Toilet facilities consisted of an outdoor "privy" located a short distance from the school building. This was standard practice until the State legislature passes a bill in 1922, requiring all "outhouses" be directly connected to the school building. The towns were given two years to finish the job or risk losing some of their school subsidy money of about \$300.00 per year. Anyone who has used an outhouse in the dead of winter

can appreciate how nice this must have been; not having to go out in the snow and sit on an ice cold seat.

Regular pupil transportation did not start until about 1900. Scholars within a mile or so from school still had to walk, etc. If any of the one room schools was not in session due to lack of a teacher or building problems, pupils were taken to the nearest district with sufficient space.

From the early 1900's until Coboro closed in 1944, only the No. 2 village school stayed open for all four sessions every year. For one reason or another, every one of the six districts were closed for a certain session (usually winter) or temporarily not used for a period of time.

From 1903 to 1953, I will try to follow the time line of events, mostly taken from town reports for that period.

By 1905, the cost to "board" a pupil near a certain school had risen to \$1.00 - \$1.35 per week. Pay to "haul" scholars was \$.50 to \$5.00 per week depending on how many they had and the distance.

The male dominated position of Superintendent of Schools finally came to an end in 1907. Miss M. E. Gavin was the first female to ever fill this position. Her school committee bosses, A.L. Allen, J.A. Farnham, and A.A. Damon felt she had done an "admiral" job. "Grammar school diplomas were granted to : Clair S. Tasker, Vera V. Wiggins, Masie M. Downs, Warren D. Fitts, Lizzie M. Tufts, Beatrice A. Mills, J. Marion Peabody, Willie F. Tasker, Laura E. Lapoint, Marjorie H. Downs, and Grace A. Lawrence.

By 1914, No. 1 school in E. Stetson had been re-opened to save transportation costs. It does not say how long it had been shut down. The high school lab. had received a class B classification from the state; they had been trying to get up-graded for some time. Clyde Rand (of oxen fame) was superintendent that year. Among several students tuitioned to four year high schools or an academy were Helen Lawrence and Lizzie Tufts.

In 1915 it was voted at town meeting, "to dig a well in the yard at the village school house." It was "drilled" about on the by George Brassbridge line, near the road. A large hand pump was installed, but the water was never fit to drink or cook with.

Mrs. Mabel Gray was the school superintendent and instrumental in purchasing the "Progressive Road to Reading" textbooks for the first three grades, new histories for the higher grades, and a text in Physiology for the lower grades. It is "the branch of biology dealing with the functions and vital processes of living organisms."

The ear and eye tests showed, "eight percent of pupils defective in eyesight or hearing."

A new state requirement for a fire escape was also discussed.

Article 47 in the 1917 town warrant was, "to see if the town will vote to build a sidewalk from the village school house lot in Stetson village in a southerly direction along the easterly side of the Exeter Road, so-called, to the junction with Main Street, determine the kind of construction, raise a sum of money for said purpose, if so, how much and determine by whom the same shall be expended." It was voted to raise

\$75.00 for the project, but there is no record of it ever being built. An unexpected balance of \$83.35 was listed in the "sidewalk account" for several years and then disappears. It was voted to keep school sessions at 30 weeks a year, still less than the state required.

Elmer F. Eddy took over as school superintendent, the first of nearly twenty years to come. He felt schools were doing well, but he did say many of the textbooks, "are badly worn and out of date." He also suggested, "that parents make a personal inspection of their children's books, and if possible make covers for the same."

By 1920, cases of influenza and diphtheria were becoming all too common, especially in the schools. Dr. Sheldon was the health officer at the time and, to keep diseases from spreading, he had to quarantine a number of scholars and sometimes whole families for days, even weeks, at a time.

In the town report of 1920-1921, consolidation of schools was very much on the superintendent's mind. He says, *"I can see no reason whatever why the scholars at East Stetson and Wolfboro should not be brought to the village. Under present conditions each teacher has on an average from eight to ten minutes for each recitation; which is certainly too short a time to accomplish much. By consolidating the three schools they will have at least fifteen minutes for each class. The buildings at Wolfboro and East Stetson are in very bad condition; while the one at the village is large enough to accommodate all the scholars and is in good condition."*

Some of the parents in these out districts argue that their children are bashful and self-conscious, and do not wish to attend a larger school; where so many of the children are strangers to them. Isn't this an argument in favor, instead of against consolidation? Won't it be a great help to these children to mingle with others, and get over this feeling of self-consciousness?

I am also inclined to think that the children from the Mt. Pleasant and Coboro districts can all be conveyed to the village during the auto season. I believe this arrangement would not only make it possible, but profitable, to run a Junior High, having three teachers at the village, including the High, all of the time, with possibly, four, when all the children are attending there.

For the past year and one half the committee and Supt. have tried to run the schools of Stetson according to what the people think the proper way, having done what they wished, and accepted their ideas in preference to our own. I for one do not hesitate to say that the schools have not made the progress they should have made; and we are held responsible.

In the past we have tried our best to carry out your ideas and plans. Now for the coming year I ask you all to take hold and help us with ours; then if the schools prove a failure we are willing to shoulder the blame. Altho we shall always be pleased to listen to any honest criticism or suggestion from you, we would ask that you quit all useless fault-finding; as it usually does more harm than good."

Other than the usual comments about the need for new textbooks, school repairs that were not made, etc., the 1922 Supt. report was rather mild. He did say the plan to consolidate the school, *"has proven a great success."* It was also felt the pupils had,

“accomplished fifty percent more than any previous year since I have been here, and at less expense to the town.” He also said, *“we have paid our teachers on an average, only a little over \$500.00 per year. The average of all elementary teachers in the state is \$727.29.”* The report stated, *“during the cold weather hot lunches have been served at the consolidated (village) school, which the children seem to enjoy very much.”* I presume the food was brought from home and heated on the wood heater, since there were no kitchen facilities and the regular “hot lunch program” did not begin until 25 years later.

In the 1924 report, article 17 was, “to see if the town will vote to move the South Stetson school house, so called, to some location in Coboro, to unite the two districts together, and if so, how much money the town will vote to raise to pay expenses, or act on anything thereto.” The building had not been used for a number of years, but was in relatively good condition. They raised \$300.00 and moved it that summer to land owned by the Fenderson’s. After moving costs that indicated oxen teams, their drivers, various chains, building repairs, and 600 ft. of rope and blocks, the building was placed at its new home. A more detailed description of the move is in column no. 7. A small overdraft of \$324.00 was covered the next year.

Having seven schools in Stetson at one time, by the mid 1920’s they were down to just five. No. 3 “Jordan” school on the E. Newport road was the first to go in about 1910. Clark Houghton (an abutting landowner) owned it, rented it as a home, later used it for hay and potato storage; finally demolishing the building in the late 1940’s.

When I started collecting data for this series, seven schools seemed like a lot for a small town like Stetson, but got a big surprise when I found Corinna had a total of eleven and Exeter supposedly had seventeen. They must have had one at every road junction.

Next time, Part 5

