Director's Note

The excitement of change fills the Vermont History Center in Barre! Construction to house the State Library rolls ahead, with an anticipated opening date of July 1st. In this issue you’ll read about auto racing in Vermont, collaborative exhibits and programs with local societies, travelling exhibits for your community to host, and programs galore.

Your support of Vermont Historical Society has made this hive of activity possible – thank you from the bottom of my heart. Amanda, Eileen, and I look forward to spending time in each of Vermont’s counties this spring and summer. We’ll explore lost race tracks, engage in discussion of objects and treasures, and attend your events and programs.

I’m especially proud of our new podcast series, presented in partnership with the Vermont Humanities Council and VTDigger. The inaugural 6-part season wraps up in April with a full 12-episode season following through next spring. The program explores history and culture through objects discovered in the collection of the Vermont Historical Society. Topics range from historic floods to 1970s innovations – check it out at www.beforeyourtime.org

With most major construction behind us, it’s time to think about what the future holds for Vermont Historical Society. Staff, volunteers, and board members will start the brainstorming process for a new strategic plan. What does the Society do well? What can we do better? How do we best serve the cultural needs of our state? How do we remain relevant in today’s world? How do we continue to secure the funding needed to execute our mission? Look for information in your e-news and the summer newsletter on how you can help us answer these questions and help chart the future of your Vermont Historical Society.

~ Steve Perkins
Executive Director

In the Galleries

This May, in partnership with the Cavendish Historical Society and the University of Vermont, VHS will open a new exhibition on the life and work of Soviet dissident writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The exhibition, sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council, will concentrate on Solzhenitsyn’s life in Vermont after his exile from the Soviet Union, and will be hosted in the Jackie Calder Gallery of the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier.

- History Center Exhibits -

Icons, Oddities & Wonders
The Emergence of the Granite City: Barre 1880 to 1940
Open through March 2018

The Art of Granite
Open through March 2018

Anything for Speed: Automobile Racing in Vermont
Opens April 28, 2018

- History Museum Special Exhibits -

Everywhere a Sign
Open through April 2018

Solzhenitsyn at 100: Jackie Calder Gallery
Opens May 19, 2018

Our Vanishing Landmarks, Chelsea & Beyond: Local History Gallery
Open through July 2018

Calendar of Events

Third Thursday: Women’s History
March 15, 12pm • Vermont History Museum, Montpelier

Digitizing Documents & Photographs Workshop
April 6 • Vermont History Center, Barre

Vermont History Day
April 7 • Montpelier High School

Third Thursday: Hurricane of 1938
April 19, 12pm • Vermont History Museum, Montpelier

Exhibit Opening:
Anything for Speed: Automobile Racing in Vermont
April 28, 9am-4pm • Vermont History Center, Barre

Third Thursday: Solzhenitsyn Retrospective
May 17, 12pm • Vermont History Museum, Montpelier

Full details and more events on our website: vermonthistory.org/calendar
Faces of the VHS

We’d like to introduce you to a few of the passionate people that help us tell Vermont's story.

DAN LORD

My name is Dan Lord and I am the Facilities Manager at the Vermont History Center. I was born in New York and came to Vermont in 1974, so I have lived in Vermont for most of my life. I have had a number of jobs including being a HVAC service technician. That is how I came to work at VHS. I was doing maintenance here and was offered the job of Facilities Manager.

I am also responsible for the grounds - mowing the lawn and keeping the trees pruned in the summer and snow removal in the winter time. I also make sure that the building is a clean environment for people to come and have an enjoyable visit. Taking care of such an old and beautiful building has been my privilege and hopefully will be that way for years to come.

BERNADETTE HARRINGTON

My name is Bernadette M. Harrington, and I work as a part-time Library Assistant at the Leahy Library. I have helped patrons with genealogical research for fifteen years, but a few years ago, I decided to expand my knowledge. This included fulfilling my goal of a Bachelor of Arts degree, and learning about Native Americans and early Quebec women. After graduating in 2014 from Union Institute & University, I studied Barre Town subjects. The Leahy Library’s online catalog contains my new research on Barre Town’s schools and papers, along with my earlier research on town clerks.

I am a Vermonter. My husband, Dwight, and I live in Barre Town, and share a passion for historical research. We met while attending Spaulding High School, and later married.

CLAIRE GILBERTSON

Hi, my name is Claire Gilbertson. I work as a part-time Library Assistant in the VHS library. I can often be found in the library office working on a computer searching for digital records for the new print items that will be added to the library collection. One of the favorite parts of my job is discovering something new about Vermont and Vermonters every day I work.

I love the story of the good doctor who had fallen asleep on the back of his horse in the middle of a stormy night. The horse got him home even though the bridge had been washed away. Or the story of the young logger who was stuck under the tree he had cut down on a cold winter day. His horse was able to pull the tree off the young logger and then carry him back to his parents. Then there is the story of .... You get the picture.

Outside of VHS, I garden in the summer. The rest of the year I take Tai Chi classes and work on my own family genealogy.
By Amanda Gustin - Public Program Manager

When you picture Vermont, you probably imagine peace, quiet and bucolic mountain views – but the state’s faster, louder side has a proud history too. 2017 saw Vermonter Ken Squier elected to the NASCAR Hall of Fame’s Class of 2018, capping a long and extraordinary career. It’s no coincidence that the summer Squier was inducted, Vermont Governor Phil Scott was out racing and winning in the Late Model division. Racing is in Vermont’s blood just as much as maple syrup.

We’re hard at work developing our next major exhibition, *Anything for Speed: Automobile Racing in Vermont* will cover over a century of thrills and spills on the short track – and beyond. We’ve uncovered a lot of firsts, discovered some really wonderful artifacts, and have loved getting to know the racing community.
Our research has taken us to every corner of the state, and no stone has been left unturned. We’ve dug deep into the photo and video archives of local historical societies – a visit to the Rutland Historical Society turned up the earliest video of racing, from a silent film shot at the Rutland State Fair in 1931. At the St. Johnsbury History & Heritage Center, we found a trophy won by the enterprising personality Forrest “Wild Trader” Grapes when he beat the competition in a 1921 hill climb.

We’ve also been interviewing men and women who have been part of the sport of auto racing for nearly their whole lives. Famous names like Beaver Dragon, Ken Squier, Joey Laquerre, Robbie Crouch, Bobby Dragon, Harold Hanaford, Dave Dion, and more. Many of our interviewees are loaning objects to the exhibit: helmets, fire suits, models of famous cars, trophies, artwork, and more.

The exhibit will be divided into three overall parts: people, places, and cars. We’ll highlight the drivers, owners, mechanics, promoters, and officials you’ve heard of – and some you haven’t. We’ll talk about tracks that only existed for a few years, and tracks that existed for decades, along with the mountains that have hosted hill climbs, the downtowns that hosted auto rallies, and the back roads that saw long-distance races. And of course, we’ll talk about the cars, the flatheads and coupes and late models that are the backbone of the sport – whether they were dragged out of a junkyard the morning of the race or whether they are six-figure custom jobs.
In Tribute: Olive Franzi

VHS mourns the loss of Olive Franzi, long-time volunteer, who died recently at the age of 97. Olive began volunteering at the Vermont Historical Society in 1986, after retiring from Green Mountain Power. Over the years, she greeted visitors and kept attendance figures at both the Vermont History Museum and Vermont History Center. We treasure the years of service she provided and will miss her kind and generous spirit.

History For Homeschoolers

By Victoria Hughes - Museum & Education Manager

During the school year, the second Wednesday and Thursday afternoons of the month are busy times at the Vermont History Museum. Approximately 50 homeschool students and their families attend the History for Homeschoolers classes. This popular series covers a wide variety of Vermont history topics and uses VHS collections and exhibits to share Vermont stories.

In December, the lesson focused on Vermont people and the exhibit Family Traits: Art, Humor and Everyday Life, on display in the Local History Gallery. The exhibit, curated by the Vermont Folklife Center, highlighted the life and work of Stanley Lyndes and included his scrapbooks, drawings, carvings, and a colorful quilt.

The homeschool students carefully examined the details of the beautiful quilt, made in 1958 by Stanley, his wife, Evelyn, and his granddaughters, Leslie and Dawn Andrews. Using this family treasure for inspiration, students created pictures of their own family memories.

Dawn Andrews, also a former VHS trustee, joined the Thursday class and shared many of the stories from her grandfather’s sketchbook. The drawings and text of Family Traits feature humorous events and seasonal activities from Stanley’s childhood in Cabot and Marshfield. The children enjoyed learning about Vermonters in the early 1900s through these family stories.

Upcoming classes will also highlight other temporary exhibits in the Jackie Calder Gallery and the Local History Gallery.

This Issue’s Mystery Photo

This issue’s mystery photo comes from an unknown source. This photo of a tree-lined street features an attractive carpenter Gothic church behind some pretty impressive trees. Is this a Vermont town? We hope so! If you can tell us where this street scene is located, please contact VHS Librarian Paul Carnahan at paul.carnahan@vermonthistory.org or (802) 479-8508.

Last Issue’s Mystery Photo

Last issue’s photo of a lumber yard remains a mystery. One person tried to read the lettering on the side of the rail car, but without much success.
Vermont History Day

Vermont students from across the state are hard at work on their projects for Vermont History Day. The annual competition is scheduled for Saturday, April 7 at Montpelier High School.

In December, students from Black River High School Middle School visited the VHS Leahy Library to conduct research about Vermont women including Clarina Howard Nichols, Edna Beard, and Ellen David Friedman. Teacher Suzette Cyr reported, “The kids were in awe, of the building, of the breadth of the materials there, and of Marjorie and Paul, who were very helpful.”

In January, students from Milton High School travelled to the Bailey/Howe Library at the University of Vermont to research their topics for Vermont History Day. The UVM librarians wanted to open this research opportunity to all students and scheduled a special help session at the library and in special collections in February. We are excited to partner with colleagues at UVM to support students doing history.

We are always recruiting judges and volunteers for the Vermont History Day state contest. If you are interested in helping out and meeting amazing young historians, contact Victoria Hughes at victoria.hughes@vermonthistory.org or (802) 828-1413.

Ways to Support VHS

1. Volunteer at the VHS
   (contact Diane Campbell at (802) 479-8503 or diane.campbell@vermonthistory.org)
   • Vermont History Center (Barre) Front Desk
   • Vermont History Museum (Montpelier) Front Desk
   • Collections
   • Library
   • Vermont History Day

2. Renew your Membership online at www.vermonthistory.org/member or call (802) 479-8503

3. Make a one-time donation to the Vermont Historical Society’s Leahy Library and help purchase some of the following wish-list items:
   » New computer to run a digital microfilm reader/printer ($600)
   » New scanner with ability to scan 8x10 glass plates ($950)
   » 1 box of 100 letter-sized, archival folders ($42)
   » 10 archival records storage boxes ($114)
   » 10 archival flip-top document cases for legal-sized papers ($67)
   » 10 archival flip-top document cases for letter-sized papers ($80)

You can donate online at www.vermonthistory.org/give or call (802) 479-8525

4. Join the Legacy Circle by designating the VHS as a beneficiary in your will or trust
   Contact Kate Olney (802) 479-8525; kate.olney@vermonthistory.org for more information.

5. Help the VHS Education Department by donating any of the following wish-list items
   Contact Victoria Hughes (802) 828-1413; victoria.hughes@vermonthistory.org if you can help
   » Wooden ukulele for hands-on exhibit at the Vermont History Museum
   » Folding card table
Members Only Special

Bring a friend to our upcoming exhibit, Anything for Speed: Automobile Racing in Vermont, for FREE! The new exhibition will debut on April 28, 2018, and we’d love to see you and your companion!

This offer expires on June 1, 2018.