

Mayor's State of the Borough – RVMHS 2016

Our board at this moment is: Ryan Berley, Curator, Margaret Christensen, At-large, Marge Firn, Treasurer, Paula Healy, Secretary, Sue Keilbaugh, Membership and Program, Morris Potter, President

2016 has been busy for the RVMHS. Since last year, when the Centennial Foundation offered us space at Thunderbird Lodge, all our focus has been on getting into that building, expanding awareness of our existence, and getting up to code with our changed situation.

In January we held our first members business meeting at the Old Mill. Thanks to the endless restoration efforts of the Centennial Foundation, we are now able to have all our meetings at Thunderbird Lodge. We signed an official lease starting September 1, and now “own” the Upper Studio space. This will house our permanent collection. The lower studio, with its accessibility, lack of spiral stairs and general volume, is a wonderful venue for mid-sized groups, and will be shared, via a license agreement, with the Centennial Foundation, as scheduling between the two entities allows.

For the past 30 years the National Arts & Crafts Conference has convened in February in Ashville, N.C. Our curator, Ryan, has attended several times, and this year Morry and Sue joined him, manning a table with RVMHS material. A few A & C aficionados were thrilled to see our presence; some people there had heard of Rose Valley; most people from our tri-state area wondered where Rose Valley is; and one woman had attended SRV. Ryan applied for, and got, a grant from the A & C Conference for the digitization of Rose Valley materials housed at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. The Athenaeum has been the repository for memorabilia from Will Price's family, which includes a huge collection of photographs and correspondence re the community's beginnings. The grant is for \$2500, to be matched by an equal grant from the Athenaeum. This represents a major step forward in making Rose Valley's arts and crafts history available for scholarship to a wide audience.

The prospect of having a physical museum has not only required us to work on the physical place; it has also required us to get our

corporate ship in order. For the first 15 years of being the RVMHS, we have operated without By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation and Directors and Officers insurance because we simply didn't need them. Thanks to Marge Finn, who has doggedly pointed out to us that no, legal forms aren't glamorous, but yes, they are necessary, we now have all three. This is a requirement for registering in the state of Pennsylvania, which we now need to do, as our gross deposits this year are in excess of \$25,000. This also will make us much more attractive to potential donors.

Our income is from membership fees, donations and programming. While membership has stayed stable at around 60, cash donations have increased, with some money specified for an endowment account. And our programming has expanded. We had 2 lectures: one on Alice Barber Stephens, for whom Thunderbird Lodge was designed, and the other on stained glass and the aesthetic controversy that erupted over 'clear vs. opalescence.' Clearly Tiffany and Co. scored a victory with opalescence.

New programming included an architectural drawing class at Thunderbird Lodge on Tuesdays through June and July, offered by the Wallingford Community Arts Center. In October the CAC came back, along with the Plastic Club of Philadelphia, for life drawing classes in both upper and lower studios. Every participant appreciated that they were in spaces designed specifically for artists. "Night at the Theatre", in collaboration with Hedgerow in September, allowed us to display some of our permanent collection along with a preview of our impending auction in their upper lobby. While all these events generated income, the main fund raising event was Masquerade!, the gala costume party/auction on October 29. With the able help of Harvey the Auctioneer, we managed to sell several high-end pieces on commission for 2 former Rose Valley families and still net \$10,000 for the RVMHS. Hence the need for By-Laws, etc.

Our programming will continue to expand in the coming years as we become a 'real' museum. Our permanent collection will be on display and our doors open on a periodic basis starting in October of 2017. We look forward to welcoming Rose Valley to our new home.