The new 2019 Then & Now Old Lyme Community Calendar is here! Come join your neighbors at the launch party for this favorite local reference, unique to Old Lyme. The calendar launch will take place 4-6 p.m. on Thursday, November 8, 2018 at the Society’s headquarters, 55 Lyme Street. Admission is free. There will be music and refreshments, and we will raffle off a gift basket kindly provided by the Chocolate Shell. The launch party is always a fun event, and we hope to see you there.

As always, OLHSI would like to thank this year’s sponsors for their participation. Starting with the month of January, they are: the Town of Old Lyme, Chocolate Shell, Coldwell Banker, Old Lyme Seafood, American Legion Post 41 Lymes, Old Lyme Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library, Old Lyme Ice Cream Shoppe, Old Lyme Marina, Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, Florence Griswold Museum, Essex Savings Bank, and The Bowerbird.

Each month features views of the past and present of one business or location, with historical details. The calendar also notes the dates of community events scheduled for 2019; a handy feature for us locals. Not just for year-round residents, the calendar makes a great gift for friends and family who spend a part or all of the year away from Old Lyme, providing an attractive and interesting reminder of their other home. Join us this Thursday and pick up a new calendar for yourself and one for a friend. Calendars are still $12 each, and all the proceeds of calendar sales at the launch party support the Historical Society.

If you cannot join us for the launch, look for the 2019 Then & Now Old Lyme Community Calendar at local venues, including: The Bowerbird, The Chocolate Shell, The Cooley Gallery, Christiansen Hardware, Florence Griswold Museum, Laysville Hardware, Old Lyme Seafood, and The Book Cellar at the Old Lyme Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library.

Again: we thank our sponsors and vendors for their support of the Society and the Old Lyme community, and we hope that you will support them, too. See you Thursday!

“Sound View Beach, 2018. Photograph by Michaelle Pearson."
The mission of the Old Lyme Historical Society, Incorporated, is to collect, preserve, interpret and promote the rich history of Old Lyme, Connecticut and its environs for the benefit of residents and visitors.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
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From the Co-Chairs

It has been a very busy summer and fall for the Old Lyme Historical Society. In June, the Society co-sponsored a concert by the Old Lyme Town Band, followed by an ice cream social. At the Midsummer Festival, we hosted tables at two different locations. At the Lyme Art Association, OLHSI Board members sold books, tote bags, maps and home goods. Our second table at the Florence Griswold Museum featured historic children’s games and crafts such as Nine Men’s Morris, Cat’s Cradle, finger knitting, and coloring pages. Thanks to all who helped make this a successful, fun day, especially our Middle School volunteers Celia LaConti, Anna Davis, Van Lampos and Phoebe Lampos for assisting the younger children with games and crafts.

The Board has continued moving forward with the Strategic Plan. One of the stated goals was greater engagement with our Lyme Street neighbors, members, and the general public. To this end, the Society hosted a very successful Summer-Fall lecture series under Bob DiNapoli’s leadership which raised money for the Scholarship Fund. In October we installed a faerie door as part of the Old Lyme Arts District’s “Faerie Doors on Lyme Street”; hosted our Annual Plant Sale; and gave out candy on Halloween. The annual Then & Now Calendar event will be Thursday, November 8th, and we look forward to again participating in the Old Lyme Children’s Learning Center’s Historic House tour on December 8th.

The Fundraising Committee will host their annual Book and Calendar Sales at the Halls Road Post Office on Saturdays in December. Edie T wining continues to curate wonderful mini-exhibits at the Post Office, Library, and Town Hall. The most recent featured “Sound View, America’s Oldest Public Beach” and “The Hurricane of ’38.” Edie has also designed a new tea towel featuring a map and drawings of historic Lyme Street, just in time for holiday gift giving. A group of volunteer stitchers convened at 55 Lyme for an old-fashioned sewing bee to hem the towels.

(continued on page 4)
In 1908 a young man with the unlikely name of Lucius Horatio Biglow III graduated from Yale after a noteworthy career on the football team where he played right guard and was named All-American in both 1906 and 1907. The following year he coached Yale to a 7-1-1 record. In 1909 he joined what would later be considered the army reserve. In 1911 he earned his law degree from Columbia. Five years later he was called to active duty with the Army and sent to Europe where he fought in several well-known battles, leaving the Army in 1919 as a captain.

The later 1920s found him, his wife and their son, Lucius Horatio IV, aka “Loosh,” living in Old Lyme at which point he opened a law office in Deep River. He called himself Ray (from the second syllable of Horatio) but as he was a very imposing figure, very few people called him that. His law partner, John Larson, admitted to calling him only Mr. Biglow. In Old Lyme he was active in the Congregational Church, serving on several committees where his law acumen was highly valued.

During the 1930s he took control of Florence Griswold’s dwindling finances and arranged the sale of her house so as to allow her to live out her life there. For many people he is best remembered for forming a high school boys’ Sunday school class for the Church. This class, guided by Ray Biglow, oops, Mr. Biglow, and one or two other adults, met in the barn (still standing) behind the Church parsonage. In the one room stood a wood stove and around the perimeter was a motley collection of wooden chairs, arm chairs and sofas, all probably leftovers from the White Elephant Sale, and a piano. A typical session, planned by one of the adults but conducted by the boys, included hymns, prayers, reading and discussion of a Bible chapter (always from the four gospels) and a business meeting where a collection was taken followed by discussion of how to use the money, usually for holiday baskets for shut-ins or for the Pastor’s fund. One week the class decided to spend the hours after class cleaning, mowing and raking the parsonage yard which dismayed Mr. Biglow as Sunday was not a day for work, particularly when church was in session. The meeting would end with a prayer by one of the adults. If it was Mr. Biglow’s turn, he would ask that the boys not fall victim to vices such as smoking, drinking or cursing as well as to other implied but un-named evils to which teen-aged boys were susceptible. He cared very deeply about the boys in the class and it seems as though they knew that he was a very special man whom they did not want to disappoint. If, on occasion, a boy got into a scrape with the law, he could count on Mr. Biglow for legal advice which was more common sense than anything: Tell the truth, be polite and take your punishment.

In late 1960, Mr. Biglow fell ill and never recovered, dying in July 1961 at age 76. A year or two later one of the other adults fell ill and the class faded away.

—Mark Lander

OLHSI Lecture Series

In October we completed our Summer/Fall 2018 evening lecture series at 55 Lyme Street. This was a first for us, giving us a chance to share our newly-renovated main hall with the community. Topics included a history of Sound View beach, the Mervin Roberts story, a history of ferries plying the Connecticut River, and a history of the Native American Nehantic tribe who lived in this area. Before the first scheduled lecture, we also hosted an impromptu presentation by two members of the US Cross Country Ski Team giving an inside look at the 2018 Winter Olympics.

All lectures were free, but donations to the Carol Noyes Winters Scholarship Fund were gratefully accepted. The fund supports scholarships for Old Lyme students going on to pursue history in college. The well attended lectures were fun and informative, and the donations helped a worthy cause. A 2019 lecture series is in the planning stages. Look for it in the coming months.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, November 8th
Then & Now Calendar Launch Party
55 Lyme Street

Saturday, December 1st, 15th & 22nd
OLHSI Book Sales
Old Lyme Post Office grounds
Our holiday book sales include books on local history and culture, our Then & Now calendar, and a few select household items such as printed trays and tea towels with designs relevant to the history of Old Lyme.

Saturday, December 8th
Historic House Tour
OLHSI book sales at 55 Lyme St.
The Historical Society’s home at 55 Lyme St. will be a stop on the Historic House Tour set up by the Old Lyme Children’s Learning Center. The main hall will be decorated for the holidays, and feature a display of vintage Christmas cards. Our Saturday book sale will be held at 55 Lyme St. this week, rather than at the Post Office.
Access to History for All

The new lift that will make the Historical Society’s home at 55 Lyme St. handicap accessible is now installed. All that remain at this writing are the final inspection and the finish work on the stairways that surround the lift.

The archive and reading room are a few steps below street level and the main hall a few steps above. Most people would barely notice the effort required to reach them. For those with mobility problems, however, a few steps can be a lock-out. Some 26% of the population of Old Lyme is 65 or over – approaching twice the national average. One fifth of this oldest cohort, nation-wide, is likely to experience serious mobility problems. A smaller but still significant number of younger people also face these challenges on a temporary or life-long basis. The Historical Society is proud to do its small part to support the determination of all people to lead a full life, come what may.

We would like to thank the many people who have contributed to this project. Generous donations from within and beyond the Historical Society have covered (to date) 80% of the cost of purchasing and installing the lift, purchasing construction materials, and hiring contractors. The “Tuesday Morning Work Crew” has given many days of volunteer skilled labor to this project, as they have to all the renovations at 55 Lyme St. Without the help of Skip Beebe, Kevin Cole, Ted Freeman, Ellis Jewett, and Stephen Joncus, a project like this would have been beyond our reach. We would also like to thank our contractors and suppliers for their excellent work and friendly cooperation: Bullock Access of East Hartford (lift vendor/installer), Sicuranza Electric, Paul Chasse (drywall), and United Builders Supply.

When final inspection and the last finishing touches are complete, the Historical Society will hold an open house to thank all those who have contributed. Please join us for libations, hors d’oeuvres, and (of course) free rides in the lift! Check our website this fall for details. As the lift fund is not yet fully subscribed, contributions are still gratefully accepted. Thanks again to all those who have already contributed their time, money, and talent to make the Old Lyme Historical Society accessible to all.
Support the Old Lyme Historical Society by becoming a member today.

2019 Membership

Date __________________

☐ New member ☐ Renewing member

Name ____________________________________________

Address _________________________________________

Town___________ State______ Zip__________

Email __________________________________________

Phone _________________________________________

☐ Student $10 ☐ Individual $20 ☐ Family $35

☐ Patron $100 ☐ Benefactor $250

☐ Business / Corporate $100 ☐ Lifetime $500

☐ Additional donation

Please make your check payable to Old Lyme Historical Society, Inc.

My check for $ ___________ is enclosed.

Dues are fully tax-deductible. Thank you for your support!

Are you interested in volunteering with the OLHSI?
If so, what areas are of interest to you?

The OLHSI is a non-profit corporation incorporated in the State of Connecticut. It is a registered charity with the state Department of Consumer Protection and is recognized by the IRS for 501(c)(3) status.

Benefits of OLHSI membership

• A subscription to the River & Sound newsletter
• Your own copy of Lyme Street walking tour
• Advance notice of and discounted rates for selected events
• A 10% discount on our books
• Training in historical research techniques, and opportunities to be involved with our oral history project
• The realization that your tax-deductible contribution is supporting a vital cultural resource

Please mail your membership form & payment to
Old Lyme Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 352, Old Lyme, CT 06371