

# Hartford Historical Society

The Garipay House • 1461 Maple Street  
Hartford Village, Vermont 05047

HARTFORD • QUECHEE • WEST HARTFORD • WHITE RIVER JUNCTION • WILDER

Volume 19, Number 4

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

March - April 2007

## A Song in the Night

by Kate M. Cone

*[Editor's Note: This article, written by former Hartford Village resident, Kate Morris Cone, originally appeared in The Vermonter in June, 1904. This work of historical fiction brings us back to the early years of the town of Hartford -- years which will be revisited as the town celebrates its 250th anniversary on July 4th, 2011.]*

Long ago, in one of the townships of eastern Vermont, settled immediately after the close of the last French and Indian War, there lived a nine-years old boy named Stephen. His home with his father and mother and brothers and sisters, was in a log cabin at the foot of a high hill overlooking the Cascadnac River. No other houses were in sight. Where now are mills and a bridge and a dam and long main street, there was only wilderness, an Indian trail through a tall pine forest, a line of rocks and rapids, and a faintly defined ford. At the junction of the Cascadnac with the Connecticut, a mile below, was a broad meadow where



*Re-enactment at Hartford's 150th Anniversary Celebration depicting the arrival of the Marsh family -- among the first settlers in Hartford.*

Indians used to camp, and the clear stream on which Stephen looked had, in days gone by, been a highway by which many a poor little English boy and girl had been carried captive to Canada. Scattered over the township there were perhaps a hundred souls, and so far apart were their dwellings, and so solitary their lives, that any occasion which brought them together was gladly improved. When, therefore, one afternoon in early June, Stephen's father came home from his work in the fields, somewhat before the usual hour, his step and his voice full of news, the whole household stopped work and gathered near him to listen. "Mother," he said, "I was over in the south clearing this afternoon when Elijah Strong went by. He called out there would be a preaching service at his house

on Sunday and wanted me to pass on the word. I didn't rightly understand who, but maybe the minister from Hinsdell, Rev. Bunker Gay, will be there."

"It will be a great day for the children," mother answered.

"There are as

*(Continued on next page)*

many as eight babies to be baptized," and she immediately began to plan about her own twins, who had been born, as had the little ones in the other families she thought of, since the last time a regular minister had been there the autumn before.

If children nowadays had a chance to go to church only two or three times a year and then everybody went, from old folks down to babies and dogs, and stayed all day and took their luncheon, they would think it as great a treat as Stephen did.

The weather was such as we know on the second Sunday in June.

In good season in the morning Stephen was on the watch for the folks from the north part of town and soon saw a little company crossing the river by the ford below the falls and toiling up the steep footpath to his father's house. There they rested a short time and then all started together for the climb over Hurricane.

At the center of the Town the Strong's kitchen was crowded, mothers with little ones occupying the few chairs, men and boys sitting in the open windows and on the doorstep, and more children than grown folks everywhere, for few as the families were, they each had from six to sixteen children. Within the memory of men now living three families in this same town sent fifty children to school in their district, so that we may feel sure that when the whole community turned out to church at the Center, pretty nearly every such Sunday might properly be called a children's day.

Stephen sat on the front seat, which was a split log laid on two blocks. After the morning sermon the eight babies were baptized and after the noon lunch another sermon was preached. Not much was said or done on purpose for the children, but I do not think they missed it. Stephen, at all events, took everything in as if it were meant for him. He liked the minister and, above all, he liked the minister's singing. He could sing a little himself, but never before had he heard so many people, led by so strong a leader, sing together. This was the hymn that went best;

"God is the refuge of his saints  
When storms of sharp distress invade,"

Stephen thought of the cold winter they had lived through, of his mother's illness and their loneliness in the little cabin on the hillside, of how frightened the little ones

had been when the wolves howled and the bears came prowling round, and how the bitter storms of snow and sleet had indeed invaded their poor home:

"Ere we can utter our complaints  
Behold him present with his aid."

that was the way it was now when, with returning spring, everything looked brighter and easier.

"Let mountains from their seats be hurled  
Down to the deep and buried there."

Out of the windows on one side Stephen could see the Pomfret and Sharon hilltops and on the other a glimpse of the Quechee range through the gap in Shallies hill. He couldn't imagine those everlasting hills being moved.

"There is a stream whose gentle flow  
Supplies the city of our God;  
Life, love and joy, still gliding through  
And watering our divine abode;"

Far below, in full view, the Cascadnac sparkled in the sunshine. It was like the sacred river of the city of God to the new township.

"That sacred stream, thine holy word,  
Our grief allays, our fear controls;  
Sweet peace thy promises afford  
And give new strength to fainting souls."

The afternoon service came to an end.

*(Continued . . .)*



## Hartford Historical Society

Post Office Box 547, Hartford, VT 05047-0547

<http://www.hartfordhistory.org>

### Officers:

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Dot Jones, President          | 802 295-2701 |
| James Kenison, Vice President | 802 738-5333 |
| David Ford, Secretary         | 802 356-2776 |
| Clyde Berry, Treasurer        | 802 295-2091 |

### Directors:

|                           |              |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Peggy McDerment, Chairman | 802 295-2357 |                                |
| Randy Dickson             | 280-1780     | Alice Hazen                    |
| Joyce Miller              | 295-2025     | Ray Miller                     |
| Noel Vincent              | 295-5932     | Bill Wittik                    |
|                           |              | 295-9683                       |
|                           |              | Dorothy Yamashita 603 448-1067 |

Fred Bradley, Honorary Director 802 295-3819

Newsletter Editor: James Kenison 802 738-5333

[newsletter@hartfordhistory.org](mailto:newsletter@hartfordhistory.org)

Each man mounted a restless horse and with wife and babies behind him and children trudging along on foot, turned homewards, several groups going southward toward Quechee and others climbing the east path over Hurricane. Stephen was among the latter. They went soberly and rather silently along, as if loathe to separate to their scattered homes, but in Stephen's head ran the hymn about the mountains and the river, the storms and God's being a refuge to his saints. Next day he whistled it now and then and when he went after the cows he sang it at the top of his lungs.

"Stephen," said his father one day later in the same week, "I want you to go to mill for me tomorrow. There is so much work to do about the planting that I can't spare John. I will tie the bags onto the mare and you onto the bags and you'll go all right."

"Yes, father," said Stephen, feeling very much as any nine-years old boy in that region today would feel if he was told to go to Boston, one hundred and fifty miles away,

on the morning train and back at night, to buy family supplies, that is, very much astonished, a good deal set up and about half and half afraid. Going to the mill at that time meant taking the grist on horseback twenty-five miles to and from Charlestown, N. H., which was the nearest place where corn could be ground. There was no road, but a tolerably clear bridle path which old Nell knew almost well enough to go over alone, and Stephen had some memory of the way they had come when the family emigrated from Connecticut. He was used to the woods and he had always had to be braver than boys are who live in a long settled country. No room for nerves or imaginary fears in those days for either girls or boys. And yet it was a lonely journey and he was a little boy. Wild beasts were plenty and Indians were still a possibility. Don't think his father did not dread to send him, and as for his mother, her heart sank like lead at the first word of the proposal. Stephen saw in a moment that they wanted him to be brave and that he must be brave for their sakes as well as for his own. He kept his trembling and knee-shaking to himself and he whistled to keep his courage up. He went

*(Continued on next page)*

---

## April Program: Rebels in Vermont!

On October 19, 1864, twenty-two Confederate soldiers under the command of Bennett H. Young attacked the village of St. Albans, Vermont. They robbed the banks in town, tried to set fire to the downtown commercial district, shot and killed one person, and then fled north to Canada with \$227,000 in their saddlebags.

The St. Albans Raid, which was one of the northernmost military Actions of the Civil War, sent shock waves through Vermont and the rest of the United States. A Vermont broadside warned of "Rebels in Vermont!" and urged all able-bodied Vermonters who could carry a gun to report to their local authorities to help guard against other Confederate invaders. Green Mountain newspapers published angry editorials calling on Canada to extradite the raiders immediately so they could be tried and hanged. A fraction of the stolen money made its way back to St. Albans, but a series of Canadian trials ended in the dismissal of all

charges against Young and the others.

Nearly 150 years later, the St. Albans Raid remains an exciting aspect of Vermont's heritage. Vermont Historical Society executive director J. Kevin Graffagnino's "Rebels in Vermont!" presentation details the events of the raid and also looks at the lives and careers of the Confederate soldiers who participated in it. As director of the Kentucky Historical Society from 1999 to 2003, Graffagnino studied the Kentucky origins and post-war careers of Bennett Young and his men, so "Rebels in Vermont!" includes more of a Southern perspective than most Vermont versions of the story.

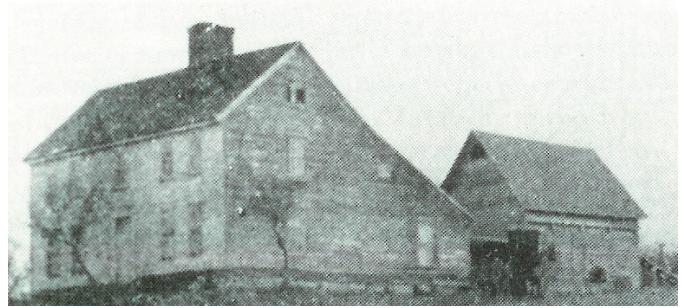
J. Kevin Graffagnino will present his program, "Rebels in Vermont!" at the Hartford Historical Society's April program on Wednesday, April 11th at 7:00 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ on Maple Street in Hartford Village. Refreshments will follow.

to bed early, but his mother heard him in the little loft of the cabin over her head, after the others were asleep, asking God to take care of him and make him a brave boy. That made her cry and she went to sleep with a prayer on her lips for his safety.

Next morning the journey seemed not half so dangerous. Stephen took an early start, his father doing as he had promised, that is, tying the bags securely on each side of old Nell and tying Stephen also to a seat on her broad back. In the saddle-bags was a substantial luncheon and Stephen felt full of importance and pleasure. The trusty horse climbed the path, traces of which may still be seen above the Woodstock railroad. From the brow of the hill the boy looked back and waved his hand and then urged old Nell into a trot on her southward journey.

Wouldn't you have liked to be with him? Four o'clock of a June morning is a lovely time in the woods and Stephen saw most of the feathered and furry inhabitants at breakfast of busy clearing up. The bobolinks were as fond then as now of the upland east of Hurricane. In the swamp, a half mile beyond, the air was filled with the fragrance of the swamp-pink and Stephen could see its pink blossoms growing in profusion in the thicket. A family of coons were washing in a pool at one place which he passed. He saw foxes whisking out of sight. Squirrels chattered at him from branches and flirted their grey tails in saucy friendliness. The forest birds seemed not afraid and, to his great delight, once one perched on the grain sack, rode a little distance, and ate corn and crumbs. Here and there he passed a house in a clearing and sometimes the path skirted a corn-field where the men were at that early hour at work. At Hartland he crossed the ford just above the Hen and Chickens, the great rocks in the river where the Indians used to fish. At Sumners Falls the path was high above the river whence he looked down at the foaming rapids and remembered that he had heard of the Indians' skill in shooting them in their canoes. A turn brought him in full view of Ascutney mountain, glorious in the morning sunshine, and he had it in sight almost all the rest of his way. He passed Windsor at about half-past seven and soon after ten he reached Charlestown and the mill.

At home the summer day was spent as usual. By six o'clock Stephen's mother began to wonder when he would come. By seven his father glanced up every now and then in hope of seeing him appear at the top of the



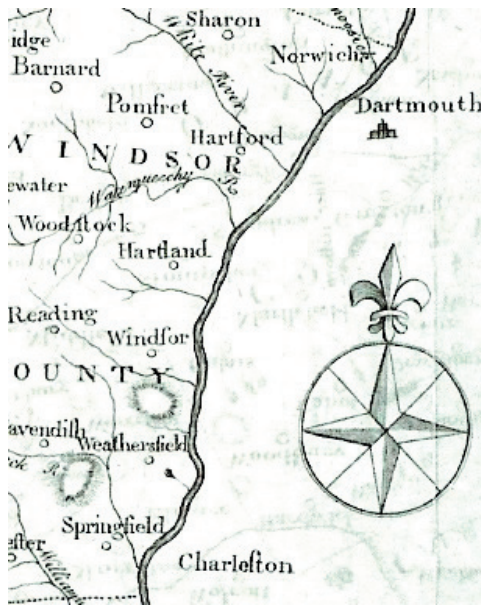
*Home of the Rev. Thomas Gross at the Center of Town. Rev. Gross was the first settled minister in the Town of Hartford, arriving shortly after the events of this story.*

hill. At half past seven big brother John said, with more carelessness than he felt, "Guess I'll go down the woods a piece and meet Steve."

Eight o'clock came and no Stephen. A little after half past-eight a horse's steps were heard and old Nell rushed into the yard, snorting and covered with foam, and -- alone. In two minutes father had seized his gun and started on the other horse up the hillside, a terrible set look in his white face and straining eyes, while poor mother, powerless to help otherwise, cared for frightened Nell. The grain sacks were safe and full of yellow meal. Not a scratch or bruise was on the animal, but she was spent with running, her eyes were wild and her nostrils bloody, and she quivered from head to foot with fear.

On through the twilight strode brother John, expecting at every turn to see Stephen. He had walked half way to Hartland when Nell galloped heavily past him, knocking him over in his effort to stop her. In the dim light he could not be sure whether Stephen was on her hack or not, but her furious gait and evident excitement told him plainly that something was wrong. He turned back toward home and presently met his father. Together they pushed southward through the fast thickening darkness, too anxious to talk, but stopping every now and then to shout and listen. Nothing answered but the night sounds of the forest, an owl, the bark of a fox, the yelp of a wolf far away, a wakeful bird, and once a heavy rustling and crashing at some distance in the hushes, at which their horse pricked lip his ears and grew restive. Down through the ravine that leads to the Quechee river it was nearly pitch dark. When they were almost through John stopped suddenly and whispered "Hark!" Far below they heard a voice, faint and shrill, whether calling or crying they could not tell. They pressed on and it sounded again distinctly. "It is someone singing," said the father. "It is Stephen!

*(Continued on next page)*



Portion of 1795 Vermont map, showing Hartford and Charlestown.

I know it!" sobbed big John, and as they came out into the starlight, on the little slope that rises just above the meadow, where the river, after dashing over the rocks of the upper fall, spreads itself out in broad shallows easy to ford, they

heard the boy's high voice bravely singing

"God is the refuge of his saints  
When storms of sharp distress invade  
Ere they can utter their complaints  
Behold him present with his aid."

Such a shout as they raised! "Stephen, oh Stephen!" they called "where are you?" "Here," came the answer, "down by the ford."

There he was, safe and sound, high up in the crotch of a big willow tree, where he had placed himself for the night. "Did old Nell get home all right?" was the first thing he said.

"Yes, and frightened us 'most to death," answered John, while his father inquired in the same breath "How did you get off her back? Didn't they tie you on at the mill?"

"I had to get off," said Stephen. "She wouldn't go over the ford. I had to get off and lead her. She snorted and snuffed and wanted to turn round. When we got almost over she heard something in the bushes behind her. She got away from me and went like a streak up the bank and into the woods. I tried to go after her, but it was so dark in there I couldn't keep the path, so I came back and thought I'd wait till morning."

"What do you suppose it was?" asked John. "Did you see anything?" "Yes, I did," said Stephen, "the cunningest sight you ever saw. A mother bear and six little bears, on

the little beach just below the fall. They drank and then they played. The mother bear lifted the little ones, one at a time, up in her arms, over her head, in front of her, just as mother does our babies sometimes, and then sat down and they all tumbled over her. It was just light enough for me to see them."

"Weren't you afraid?" said John, while Stephen, who was sitting in front on the horse, felt his father's arm tighten round him. "No," said Stephen, "she looked so motherly, and I don't think she saw me. I did feel afraid when it grew darker, but then I began to sing and felt better, and I sang as loud as I could so my voice wouldn't shake."

"We heard you," said John, "way up in the woods. I guess I shan't forget 'God is the refuge of His saints' in a hurry."

"Let's sing it to mother," said Stephen, "when we get near home. If we sing, she'll know we're all right."

Half-past ten and the other children, weary with waiting, had gone to bed and to sleep. Mother, sitting on the door-step in the soft summer darkness, her head bowed on her hands, was tracing in her mind every step of the way that Stephen had had to go and wondering at what point the fatal accident had happened. Was he drowned at the Connecticut ford? Had an Indian by any chance met him and carried him off? It must be wild beasts, and she shuddered as, at that moment, she heard a wolf howl up on Hurricane. Then she started and sprang up. Faint and far off she heard singing. It grew nearer, men's voices and a child's -- Stephen's voice -- till she could plainly distinguish the words,

"There is a stream whose gentle flow  
Supplies the city of our God.  
Life, love and joy still gliding through  
And watering our divine abode."

Like a shout of triumphant came the last verse,

"That sacred stream, thine holy word,  
Our grief allays, our fear controls,  
Sweet peace thy promises afford  
And give new strength to fainting souls."

No wonder her "fainting soul" revived. She sprang into the house to answer the singing with a light, and when father and sons came up to the door she stood there laughing and crying for joy as Stephen called out "I'm all right, mother. It was only a mother bear."



## News and Notes

### Membership Renewals Due

Dues for 2007 were due by December 31st. To avoid being removed from our mailing list, please submit your payment soon.

If your label lists an expiration date of 2006/12 or earlier, then your dues are past due and your name will be dropped from our mailing list. Your prompt payment of dues enables the Society to maintain the Garipay House and preserve Hartford's history.

### Change in Open House Schedule

The Board of Directors voted at its November meeting to change the Open House schedule. Effective immediately, Open Houses will be held from February through October on the first Tuesday, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.; from May through September an additional Open House will be held on the second Sunday from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. There will be no Open Houses from November to January.

In addition to scheduled hours, the Garipay House is open by appointment. To schedule an appointment, please call Pat Stark at (802) 295-3077 (days) or (802) 296-2192 (evenings). People interested in volunteering to host an Open House should call Pat as well.

### History Expo 2007

The Annual Vermont History Expo will be held again at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds on June 23 and 24. The Hartford Historical Society will again be participating, this year with a display centered around the event's transportation theme: "Vermonters: How they got there."

The Society's display will feature the former Twin State Airport that was located in the Sykes Avenue area of White River Junction.

Anyone with information, stories or photographs to share is asked to contact Pat at 295-3077 (days), or 296-2192 (evenings). Volunteers will also be needed to man the Society's booth at the Expo.

### Board Changes

At the January meeting of the Hartford Historical Society Board of Directors, Peggy McDerment was voted in as Chairman of the Board, and Clyde Berry was voted in as Treasurer to complete Peggy's term in that position.

Typically, officers are chosen at the Annual Meeting in June, while the Board Chairman is chosen at the following Board Meeting. Since the Society fiscal year follows the calendar year, it was decided that it would be more efficient for Clyde to begin as Treasurer at this time. Clyde will seek re-election in that position at the Annual Meeting in June.

*Celebrate 250 years with us!*  
*July 4, 1761 - July 4, 2011*

HANOVER • HARTFORD • LEBANON • NORWICH

### **250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee Organizational Meeting**

Thursday, April 12, 2007  
7:00 pm

United Methodist Church of White River Jct.  
106 Gates Street • White River Jct., VT

The Hartford Historical Society is inviting local Historical Societies, Chambers of Commerce, Non-profit Organizations and other interested citizens from our four towns to form a committee to prepare for the celebration of our 250th Anniversary.

If you are interested in participating, please contact us by mail (see page 2) or e-mail at [uv250@hartfordhistory.org](mailto:uv250@hartfordhistory.org).

**Help the Upper Valley celebrate 250 years  
with a bang!**



## News and Notes

### Book Project Update

The committee undertaking the update of John St. Croix's Historical Highlights of the Town of Hartford, VT met on Sunday, January 21st at the Garipay House.

The committee agreed on a general layout for the book and took survey forms for local businesses and organizations to complete for the project. It was decided to call for suggestions from the community for the title of the new book. The committee will meet again on Sunday, April 15th at 2:00 pm at the Garipay House.

In addition to updating the book to include items from the past 40 years, St. Croix's original work will be revised to reflect changes that have occurred since

the publication.

Volunteers are still needed to help collect data and to prepare for publication. If you are interested in helping, please contact Jim Kenison at (802) 738-5333.

Monetary donations to help cover the costs related to this project and other society work are always welcome and appreciated.

*In Memory of*

**Susan Rising-Sowersby**

**August 14, 1945 - January 27, 2007**

The Hartford Historical Society Board of Directors would like to offer its condolences to the family of Society member Mrs. Rising-Sowersby.



## Curator's Corner

Here are just a few of the donations we have processed so far this year:

- Photo - Wreck of the engine "Dover" at WRJct, about 1888 by G. E. Fellows
- Postcards of WRJct, including Union Station, Track at Fair, School Bldgs., Wilder Bridge
- Wilder Motel registration pad holder and other motel items
- Vermont Ag. Fair Assoc., WRJct, Ribbon - First Premium, 1923
- Wilder Dam Construction Slides taken by Robert I. Gilman
- J.J. Newbury Floor Grate from upper level over heat duct
- Painted Envelopes by Cora Newton to Katherine [Pogar], 1938
- Photograph of Hartford Village from across river, showing dam, ice house, Pease Grain Store
- Scan of panoramic photo of West Hartford and Handy Farm from RR Tracks
- Hartford Grade School Class Photos, early 1920's
- Hartford High School Class Photo - Class of 1930
- WRJct Drive-In Theater Speaker

By Pat Stark, *HHS Archivist*  
archivist@hartfordhistory.org

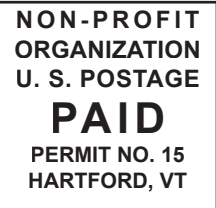
- 1947 Commencement Exercises Program with name card - Esther Brown
- 1943 Quechee School Graduation Invitation with name card - Esther Brown
- Quechee Church History, 1831-1966, by Alice Farrington and Mae Jemery, 1966
- Printing Blocks from various WRJct businesses
- Various items and documents pertaining to the Cone Family and the Hartford Woolen Mill
- 16" x 20" arial photo of Stonecrest Farm on Christian Street by Curtis Flying Service, circa 1930
- Box of cards and letters of condolence on Dr. Worthen's death
- Documents from Cascadnac Grange
- Box from Hartford Rubber and Truss Company, WRJct
- Basketball Schedule, 1932-33, with many local ads
- "Hartford Smudge" Vol. 1, 1935 - several issues
- HHS Diploma - Leah Irene Braley, June 18, 1936
- Many other items, documents and photographs too numerous to list here.

Donations of items pertaining to the town of Hartford are always welcome!

# Hartford Historical Society

Post Office Box 547

Hartford, Vermont 05047-0547



**April Program:**  
**Wednesday, April 11, 2007**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Rebels in Vermont!**



## HHS Calendar

### Special Meetings, Programs and Events

Programs are held at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ on Maple Street in Hartford Village at 7:00 p.m. and are followed by refreshments.

**Wednesday, April 11 -- *Rebels in Vermont!*** J. Kevin Graffagnino will give a lively description of the only Civil War action in Vermont, The St. Albans Raid.

**Thursday, April 12, 2007 -- *250th Anniversary Planning Committee Organizational Meeting*** at the United Methodist Church, 106 Gates Street, White River Jct., VT @ 7:00 p.m. Community members from the Towns of Hartford, Norwich, Hanover and Lebanon will meet to discuss plans for the 250th Anniversary of the four towns.

**Sunday, April 15 -- *Book Update Committee Meeting*** at the Garipay House @ 2:00 p.m. Members of our Book Update Committee will discuss the progress and next steps to be taken in updating John St. Croix's Historical Highlights.

**Wednesday, June 13 -- *The Transformation of Quechee.***

From a sleepy little village to a beautiful and vibrant community, Quechee has undergone an incredible transformation since the 1960's. Presented by John Lutz.

### Ongoing Meetings and Events

Regular meetings and Open Houses are held at the Garipay House, 1461 Maple Street in Hartford Village unless otherwise noted.

**First Tuesday (February through October) -- *Open House.*** 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. The public is welcome to visit the Garipay House and see items from our collection on display. Volunteers are on hand to give tours and answer any questions.

**Second Sunday (May through September) -- *Open House.*** 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. The public is welcome to visit the Garipay House and see items from our collection on display. Volunteers are on hand to give tours and answer any questions.

**Fourth Tuesday -- *HHS Board of Directors Meeting.*** 7:00 p.m. For more information, please contact Peggy McDerment, Board Chairman (See page 2 for contact info.)