Peconic Bay Shopper
preserving your North Fork history.

OCTOBER 2014

HURRICANE SEASON

ANOTHER CONTEST.....

TOURIST CENTERFOLD MAP
On the Cover:

Halloween, early 1940s, Southold.

Left to right: Pat Dart (Milford), Kay Van Duzer (Goldsmith), Sandy Dart (Kaser), David Averette, Betty Flynn (Picozzi) and Lois Sanford (Ketcham). Photo courtesy of Sandra Kaser.

Thanks to an email from Susan Mulholland, we now have the name of the gym teacher in the photo on the September 2014 issue: Ludmilla Donohue. Thank you Susan!

Have you looked at a copy of “Trawling My Town” by Southold Town Historian Antonia Booth? 100% of the sales is donated to help the homeless through “John’s Place” or “Maureen’s Haven” $20. Available at Academy Printing. Stop in and flip through it.
In the late nineteenth and very early twentieth century there was little amusement available (no radio, television, Internet, few books, and only the occasional silent movie.) Street theatre, like organ grinders and dancing bears, provided much entertainment. Communication with neighbors, either face to face, or through letter writing probably meant more in those days than it does today.

PETE THE 4-LEGGED CHICKEN OF MATTITUCK: Obviously there was something wrong with the egg, but it produced this attraction in 1920. Pete was exhibited and photographed as a novelty (and entertainment).
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Gildersleeve’s General Store c. 1895:
Each hamlet in Southold Town had a general store. This was a particularly large one, in Mattituck near the railroad station. Its porch provided a stage of sorts for the performance by the organ grinder and his monkey. Strapped around the man’s neck is a street organ, a mechanical organ designed to play in the street. Most organ grinders were recent immigrants who chose to be street performers in order to support their families. The organ grinder’s monkey held out a tin cup, soliciting money from the audience.

PERFORMING BEARS: Somewhat like the organ grinder and his monkey, other men traveled with bears who could stand up on their hind legs and dance, expecting small sums of money from onlookers who were entertained by the animals.
MORRELL BROTHERS, GROCERS: Of Cutchogue. Later, Morrell Brothers had a garage in Cutchogue as well. It’s a fine way to have your groceries delivered. A pre-cursor of Peapod.

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MATTITUCK POST OFFICE ON PIKE STREET: with a horse and buggy in front.
See page 11 for another view with a “horseless carriage” parked in front.

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HURRICANE MEMORIES

Each Fall on the East End thoughts turn not only to the beauty of the foliage but also to the threat of a hurricane. Those who lived through the Big Blow of 1938 will never forget that frightening experience which struck eastern Long Island with such violence and with no warning from the Weather Bureau. Fifty years ago on Sept. 21 brutal winds from the Caribbean slammed into our area making history. Those who lived through the Big Blow of 1938 will never forget that frightening experience which struck eastern Long Island with such violence and with no warning from the Weather Bureau. Fifty years ago on Sept. 21 brutal winds from the Caribbean slammed into our area making history.

Dorothy Morse was working in her father’s hardware store in Peconic and watched the barometer go down as pine trees across the street slowly toppled. Her father, Willard Howell, came to close the store and they hurried home, dodging shingles blown from nearby buildings. She remembers how calmly her grandparents, the Harry Fitz’s, reacted. Later a friend walked from Southold along the railroad tracks to tell them of Dot’s uncle’s accident. Emmet Young, while tying down the roof of his chicken house, was crushed against the barn when the roof lifted off. Mr. Young died the next day.

Carl Vail was driving home from Detroit when he heard on the radio that the last 45 miles of eastern L.I. had been washed out to sea by the hurricane. He was finally able to get through to Riverhead by phone and be reassured that they were still there. Detouring fallen trees and wires, he reached Southold that evening to find that a bus load of students had taken refuge in his Main Road home. After the storm, Carl went with an insurance adjuster to the Westhampton area. A number of his customers had houses housed in a large garage. At the location they found nothing but gasoline pump pipes where the garage and cars had been. Carl’s friend, Eddie Warner, had a game of Solitaire laid out on a card table in his bungalow. The storm washed his home 1 1/2 miles down a canal between Shinnecock and Moriches bays. When Eddie was able to get to the building, he found the cards just as he had left them!

George Arkscin counts himself lucky to have survived Hurricane Carol. He was with Capt. Don Gross on his boat at Point Judith in the harbor of Galilee. Weather reports were more accurate by then, so they knew they were in for a rough time. They were forced to leave dock side and head for an offshore trawler where they could tie up and ride out the storm. The trip across that wild water, dodging floating debris, oil drums, logs, was an ordeal they never forgot. In the ‘38 blow, George was on the farm in Bay View. His sister was cut by flying glass so George drove her to Dr. Stokes’s office in the village. As the storm increased, roads were impassable so he left his sister at the doctor’s and walked to Bay View with Fred and Alec Koke. As they passed the present Jacques home, the roof blew off, making them realize how severe the storm was.

Yankee Magazine reports the experience of that respected senior lady of Orient, Fanny Case King, who was on the ferry Catskill during the hurricane. Unable to make New London harbor, Capt. Clarence Sherman headed back into the wind toward long Island. A seasick crew struggled against the gale that pushed the boat down the Sound almost to Riverhead. After ten hours of terror on the water, the eight passengers were able to disembark at Groton, thankful to be alive. According to Mrs. King, Capt. Sherman never recovered from the stress of that awful trip.

There were many stories of courageous coping as East Enders experienced this disaster. Sixty matinee patrons at the Greenport theatre owed their safety to Manager Herman Ficken. Sensing imminent danger, he ordered them to file out to the street minutes before the building collapsed. Part of the roof of ELI Hospital was ripped away. Patients looked up from their beds to see an angry sky above, but there was no panic. Supt. of Nurses Wolf calmly directed her staff to make the patients comfortable on the floor below.

Deprived of electrical power by Wednesday’s storm, the staff at the Long Island Traveler was still able to get out the paper by Thursday. A special four-page edition was printed on a hand press, now a collector’s item. Almost everyone’s property suffered some damage, especially the loss of beautiful shade trees. Fall vegetables in the fields were covered by salt spray and farmers were forced to a late harvest of crops. Hard hit in Southold were Goldsmith and Tuthill’s lumber yard, Goldsmith’s Boat Shop and Sanford’s Boat Yard at Mill Creek which was managed by Nate Sayre. Cottages along the shore line were destroyed or washed off foundations. Road crews and utility workers spent many days bringing the town back to normal. In spite of all this, local villagers considered themselves fortunate compared to the devastation and loss of life in the Westhampton area and along the New England coast.

If you enjoy stories about the North Fork from earlier times, THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU!

North Fork Nostalgia is a collection of short stories from the Scrapbooks of Becky Terry, written for the Peconic Bay Shopper from 1978-1993. Her children, Richard R. Terry and Barbara Terry Charnes, have put them into book form with many photos of the early years of Southold Town. Becky could trace her roots back to Peter Hallock and Jeremiah Vail and growing up in Peconic in the 20’s and 30’s gave her lots to write about: Rural School Days, Early Southold Hotel, Theater, Ice House, Railroad Nostalgia, Memories of the Titanic, The Pickle Factory Train Crash and Blizzard of ’38 are just a few story titles.

You can purchase a copy at the Academy Printing Services, Southold Historical Society, Southold Pharmacy and Preston’s Store in Greenport.

The Peconic Bay Shopper • Preserving Local History • October 2014
Be Prepared!

- Fill your car with gas
- Fill plastic bags with water and place them in the freezer
- Get extra cash out of the bank
- Fill prescriptions

Consider having a large kit at home, and smaller portable kit in the car or your workplace...

- Bottled water (1 gallon per person/per day for 3 days)
- Canned goods and nonperishable foods ...and a manual can opener
- Radio (battery-powered or hand crank), with extra batteries
- Cell phone with charger, extra battery and solar charger
- Flashlight or lantern, with extra batteries
- First aid kit, prescriptions, medications and eyeglasses
- Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils, paper towels
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and other personal items and feminine hygiene supplies
- For babies: diapers, wipes, baby food, formula
- For pets: food, supplies, tag, crate, medication
- Paper and pencil, cash or travelers checks, copies of important documents
- whistle to signal for help
- Sleeping bag or blanket (per person)
- Change of clothes and sturdy shoes (per person)
- Matches in a waterproof container...and a fire extinguisher
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities

Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper (when diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.)

And if you have young ones, keep your child’s favorite stuffed animal or security blanket handy, and let them pick out favorite books, games or puzzles for the “adventure”

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