

Victoria's Messenger

August/September 2008

The Newsletter of the Victorian Society at Falls Church, VA

E-mail: vicsofc@hotmail.com

Mail: P.O.Box 7436, Falls Church, VA 22040

IMPORTANT VICTORIAN SOCIETY NEWS

THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2008, 4:00 – 7:00 P.M., AT FRADY PARK IN FALLS CHURCH. IN ADDITION TO THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS WE WILL HOLD A PICNIC (BRING YOUR OWN BASKET), A READING OF JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY POEMS, AND LAWN BOWLING. SO COME JOIN US FOR A FUN TIME IN NEWLY REFURBISHED VICTORIAN FRADY PARK. CALL MIDGE WANG (703-534-8394) TO RSVP OR FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Big Events Are Front Page News!

(to see the rest of the Victorian Society calendar go to page 2)



Saturday, September 6, Wright Brothers Reenactment at Fort Myer

September 6, 2008 is the date of the Ft Myer 100th anniversary of the first military demonstration of the Wright Brothers Aircraft. Thirty Victorian Society members will be providing the 1908 re-enactments. This will be a big event with fun activities for the family including service aviation displays, 1908 Wright Flyer display and simulators, museum exhibits, musical performances, concessions and souvenirs. The event runs from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. with the opening ceremony at 10 a.m. For more information call 703-696-3283 or 696-2976.

Victorian Society re-enactors - Those of you who have signed up as re-enactors will be contacted separately with information about this event.

Come One....Come All!
to the
VSFC's Annual Ball

UNDER THE BIG TOP

Sunday, October 12
at the Army-Navy Country Club



It's the social event of the season and one that you definitely will not want to miss. In the spirit of the Astor's and the Vanderbilt's we are hosting a themed ball. You'll enjoy fabulous food, 19th century dancing, festive circus-themed decorations, a silent auction, entertainment, and plenty of fun. Plus, don't forget to bring your camera because we'll have a special circus-themed backdrop set-up so you can have your photo taken.

We begin at 6 p.m. with a cash bar (tickets will be sold at the ball), and then move on to a 7 p.m. sit-down dinner. Dinner selections are grilled salmon (with citrus sauce) and boneless breast of chicken (with basil cream sauce), rice pilaf or oven roasted potatoes (chef selected) and fresh seasonal vegetables OR honey mustard New York sirloin sliced with three peppercorn sauce, fresh seasonal vegetables, and oven roasted potatoes. A vegetarian selection is also available.

After dinner the dancing begins with Corky Palmer as our dance master. Don't know how to dance? Well, not to worry, because, just like last year, there will be plenty of easy dances for those who are 19th century dance challenged. And, even if you don't want to dance you'll have a grand time watching the ladies in those glorious Victorian ball gowns and socializing with all of your society friends. Don't have Victorian clothing? That's fine, too. Just show up in your

finest modern-day apparel. Feel inclined to dress in a circus costume? That's fine, too.

And, don't forget to bring your checkbook because, as in the past, we will have a silent auction with all sorts of wonderful antiques and reproductions, gift items, and services you'll want to bid on. Who knows what special item(s) you'll be able to walk home with! Last year there were some great treasures and we are sure that this year will be no different.

The cost is \$65 per person if we receive your reservation prior to September 21. After September 21 the cost is \$75 per person. A reservation flyer is included in this Messenger. *Take advantage of the early registration discount - don't delay in sending in your reservation.* Contact Linda Lau at 703-425-0292 for more information about the ball.

Donations Appreciated!

Interested in donating something for the silent auction? We are looking for antiques, reproductions, gift items, and certificates for products/services. Donations are tax-deductible and help the society meet its fundraising goals. Please contact Maryll Kleibrink (703) 534-4003 to make a donation. Thanks!

And now for the rest of our events...

Saturday, August 9 – Mystery Dinner on the Strasburg Railroad

A reminder for those going on the Mystery Dinner – **you should arrive at the train station no later than 6 p.m.** The train leaves at 6:30 and the mystery starts to unfold at the train station prior to our boarding the train. If you have any questions contact Penny Crittenden at 540-788-9552.

Saturday, August 16 – Potomac Place Tea

Potomac Place in Woodbridge, VA welcomes us back for a tea party on August 16th at 2:30 in the afternoon. We had a most enjoyable time when last there. They are so appreciative of our efforts, both the attentive staff and the interested and friendly residents. We individually display our outfits and a short talk is given; this year the topic will be the history of Tea in China and early porcelain tea cups, in keeping with their interest in the Olympics 2008. We are then seated at the tables with the residents and some of their families and are served a very nice tea party. We need a decent sized representational group to attend, both ladies and gentlemen. All periods of clothing are suitable - the more variety the better. Please call Midge to sign up. They look forward to our coming and this is an important part of our society mission; to teach about our period and to share with others {not just "fun for us"}.

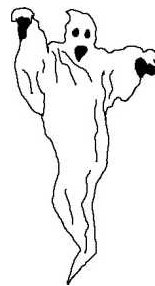
Saturday, September 27, Book Discussion Group

We've decided to change tactics this year and will read several books relating to the Victorian era but not actually written or published in the Victorian era. Our first book in this vein is *Devil in the White City* by Eric Larson. It tells the fascinating story of the building of the Chicago 1893 World's Fair (the White City) and a serial killer operating in Chicago at that time (the Devil). The book provides a revealing look into the goings-on of Victorian Chicago. **We will meet at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Hope. Please RSVP to Terry Hooper at 703-241-2751.**

Saturday, October 4, Visit to Lincoln's Cottage

During the Civil War, President Lincoln and his family resided seasonally (June – November 1862-64) at the Soldiers' Home in Washington, DC. Founded in 1851 as a home for retired and disabled veterans of American wars, the Soldiers' Home stood on 250 acres atop the third highest area in the District of Columbia. After a \$15 million restoration President Lincoln's Cottage is now open to the public and provides an intimate, never-before-seen view of Abraham Lincoln's presidency and family life. The tour begins at 10 a.m. and after our tour of the cottage and a visit in the museum we plan to go over to Maine Avenue for lunch at Phillips Restaurant. After that we are hoping to tour Ft. McNair, sight of the Lincoln assassins' imprisonment and hanging. Lincoln Cottage tickets are \$10 per person and the tour is limited to 20 people. **Contact Midge Wang at 703-534-8394 to reserve your ticket.**

Friday, October 24, Ghost Stories Literary Evening



Are you afraid of ghosts, goblins, and things that go bump in the night? Are you ready to spend a spooky evening at haunted Cherry Hill? Join us as we dig up some ghostly Victorian stories that are sure to set your nerves on end. Why you might even have an encounter with the purported Cherry Hill ghost. You do believe in ghosts, don't you? As always, the fun and entertainment will start at 8 p.m. at Cherry Hill Farmhouse in Falls

Church. In addition to the readings, there will be refreshments and perhaps you'll be able to persuade our own teller of fortunes, Madame Penny, to give you a personal reading. Attendance is free to those arriving in Victorian attire; otherwise the price of admission is a pittance – only \$4 per person. **Call Diane Morse 703-248-5171 to book your seat.**

Saturday, November 8, The Virginia Grand Military Band Salute to John Philip Sousa

We have obtained tickets to this wonderful event which will salute America's 'March King' John Philip Sousa. Widely recognized as one of the finest bands of its kind, the Virginia Grand Military Band performs at the Rachel M. Schlesinger concert hall on the Alexandria campus of the Northern Virginia Community College. **Ticket prices are \$20/person** and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. **To obtain a**



ticket contact Midge Wang at 703-534-8394. If you love the music of John Philip Sousa then this is a concert that you will definitely not want to miss!

Sunday, November 16, *Peter Pan* at the Riverside Dinner Theater

Mark your calendar now for Sunday, November 16th. We have a block of tickets reserved for lunch and the production of J. M. Barry's *Peter Pan* at the Riverside dinner theatre outside Fredericksburg, VA. Our members have always had a very fine time at this theatre enjoying the food served to our tables as well as very professional productions. As an added incentive, we suggest wearing your new 1908 attire since Barry was an Edwardian. Of course period attire is not required. Tickets are \$44.75 and I need your checks by October 1st so that we can request additional tickets if needed. **If you are interested in this theater outing please contact Midge Wang to RSVP. Make checks payable to the VSFC and send your's in today.**

Other Items of Interest

Beginning on March 8, 2008 and running through January 18, 2010, the Smithsonian American Art Museum presents a small, focused exhibition celebrating Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural ball, which was held March 6, 1865, in what is now the museum's historic home, but was then the U.S. Patent Office. The exhibition, which marks the 143rd anniversary of this historic event, features the invitation, dance card, menu and a gown worn at the ball, as well as engravings illustrating the night's events. To place the ball in historical context, the exhibition traces events beginning with Lincoln's re-election and inauguration through his assassination and funeral a month after the ball. It also spotlights the spaces in the building where the ball events took place, including the entrance for guests at the second floor south portico, where the exhibition is on view, and on the third floor where more than 4,000 guests danced the night away in the north wing and the east wing, which is now called the Lincoln Gallery, as they celebrated the imminent end of the grueling Civil War. The west wing, now home to the museum's Luce Foundation Center for American Art, was the venue for a sumptuous buffet supper, which ended in a riotous melee that was featured in the newspaper accounts the following day. The exhibition coincides with the upcoming presidential election and inaugural season, and also with the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth in 1809.

On Saturday, August 16 relive one of the most memorable events to take place in the museum's historic building was Lincoln's second inaugural ball. Members of the Victorian Dance Ensemble, dressed in costumes and trained in the customs of the period, will recreate the grace and elegance of mid-nineteenth-century dancing. You will have the chance to learn the steps and join in the festivities. Performances are noon, 2 and 4 p.m. in the great hall, third floor.

The National Portrait Gallery's exhibition *Tokens of Affection and Regard: Photographic Jewelry and Its Makers* opens October 24 and runs through June 21, 2009. Photographic jewelry flourished throughout the period from 1840 to 1875 and beyond. This poignant exhibition, drawn

primarily from the collection of Larry J. West, features rare and exquisite jewelry containing portraits in the 19th century's four main photographic processes—daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes and paper prints. Produced, exchanged and treasured as "tokens of affection and regard," these relics of loving attachments speak to the deepest of human sentiments. They are complemented in the exhibition by portraits (a gift from Mr. West) of some of the pioneering American photographers who created and marketed photographic jewelry, including Mathew Brady, Jeremiah Gurney, Albert Sands Southworth and Josiah Johnson Hawes.

Of Special Interest to Members

A Woman's Handiwork: Stitches in Time

On Sunday, October 5, Caroline Hottenstein displays her collection of antique hand-sewing tools and links them to different styles of needlework. You'll see fine examples of antique lace, embroidery, linens, beadwork, and clothing and hear about the historical importance of needlework in women's lives. Choose to follow the program with either a full English tea OR a basic embroidery lesson, led by Ms. Hottenstein. Linen, needles, and embroidery floss provided.

Program only, 1 – 2:30 p.m., \$12

Program & embroidery lesson, 1 – 3:30 p.m., \$20

Program & tea, 1 – 3:30 p.m., \$30

For reservations and to pay for the event call Greenspring Historic House at 703-941-7987. Advance reservations are required.

Note: Ms. Hottenstein has provided for VSFC members two excellent programs; one on the care and conservation of antique clothing and, most recently, one of how to recover parasols. We are sure that this program on handiwork will fill up fast so be sure to make your reservations quickly.

Great News! Frady Park Victorian Gazebo now complete

As we have reported in previous newsletters, Frady Park in Falls Church is undergoing a major renovation thanks in large part to the efforts of the VSFC. The new Victorian style gazebo is complete and it looks terrific. The City is now



beginning work on the lawn bowling rink and walkways. As you know, in the past the VSFC funded a Victorian style fountain and birdbath as well as Victorian plantings. We have also donated over \$6,000 for the lawn bowling rink and other upgrades to what is truly a Victorian park, right in the heart of the City. And don't forget...our annual membership meeting will be held at Frady Park so you'll get to see all the wonderful changes for yourself.

Lavender Bottles/Wands

By Karla Pringle

Prized down the centuries for its perfume, medicinal properties and rich violet hues, lavender has been the darling of all herbs since time began. Among its many qualities, it is thought to calm irritable children and relieve insomnia, anxiety and depression – in other words, to create a wonderful sense of well-being.

Lavender's association with Victorian England is wonderfully romantic. Young ladies of the era used to while away afternoons making lavender bottles by encasing lavender heads in their own stalks, then weaving them with ribbon. Sadly, these charming drawer and cupboard natural sachets are all but extinct. Although they are not difficult to make, they are fiddly and time-consuming, which means they are not commercially viable. Revive the tradition by making your own, using ribbons in muted colors to complement the lavender. Use these delicate wands to scent your linen cupboards, lingerie drawers or tuck under your bed pillows. The scent and calming effects will sweep over you like a cool breeze.



To make a lavender bottle, take 9 (or any odd number) stalks of freshly picked lavender and gather in a bunch. Using the ribbon, tie the stalks together tightly at the top. Very carefully bend the stalks down one by one over the lavender heads, being careful not to snap them. Weave the ribbon in and out of the stalks. When you have covered the heads, wrap the ribbon around the stalks and bind them to their ends. Cover the ends of the stalks with the ribbon, then bind back up the stalks until you reach the heads again. Tie a knot and a bow to fasten. Each bottle uses up a fair amount of ribbon, but since the quantity depends on both the length of the lavender stalks and the width of the ribbon (1.4 inch width is best); buy approximately 2 1/4 yards and make several bottles.

Victorian ladies, it seemed, never grew tired of the fragrance of lavender and, sadly, this contributed to its waning popularity in the early twentieth century during which it became associated with old ladies. But as interest gradually returned to things natural in the latter half of the century, lavender has seen another revival.

(Excerpts taken from *Lavender* by Tessa Eveleigh)



JELL-O®

The Perfect Summertime Dessert

I don't know about you but I always think of Jell-O as an invention of the 1940s or 50s. Maybe that's because when I was going to school it was a staple of the school cafeteria. Even today, go to any cafeteria (are there any around?) or all-you-can-eat buffet and you'll still find Jell-O on the menu.

But Jell-O and the gelatin product it is based on are not products of the 1940's or 50s; powdered clarified gelatin was actually patented in 1845 by Peter Cooper. Cooper, inventor of the famous steam locomotive "Tom Thumb," founder of Cooper Union, and patron of the arts and sciences bought a glue factory in 1822. There he developed methods for manufacturing glue, isinglass, and gelatin (the manufacture of glue and gelatin are very much related). Cooper was a shrewd businessman, one of the most successful of his day, and he also had a talent for invention. Cooper's range of patents rivaled Thomas Edison's for sheer variety, going far beyond glue and gelatin manufacture and touching on the most important technologies of his day.

Gelatin itself, however, was discovered long before 1845. History's first reference to it is in 1682, when a Frenchman named Denis Papin recorded his research on the subject. His experiments resulted in a method of removing the glutinous material from animal bones by boiling. Gelatin has no taste, no odor, and, when combined with liquid, no color, but it is pure protein. The gourmet-minded French like their foods en gelée and their word for it is gelatine.

Cooper described his product as a "transparent, concentrated substance containing all the ingredients fitting it for table use in a portable form, and requiring only the addition of hot water to dissolve it, so that it may be poured into moulds and when cold will be fit for use." Cooper marketed his powdered gelatin invention as "Peter Cooper's Clarified Gelatine" throughout the Northeastern United States and beyond. This image shows the side of a box of his gelatin. Cooper did not pre-flavor his gelatin, but left it to the imagination of the cook to devise flavorings and other uses (such as "blanc mange," or "white sauce"). One of the recipes shown on the side of the box is for lemon table jelly, an early ancestor to Jell-O. One of the recipes listed below, "Grandma Willis' Coffee Jello," is the type of recipe our Victorian ancestors would have made with Cooper's invention.



Although he packaged his gelatin in boxes with directions for use, Cooper did very little marketing of it. Home cooks still relied on sheets of prepared gelatin, which had to be clarified by boiling with egg whites and shells and dripped through a jelly bag before they could be turned into shimmering molds, a very time consuming process.

Peter Cooper died in 1883 and in 1895 the patent was sold to Pearle B. Wait, a LeRoy, New York, cough syrup manufacturer. Apparently, the cough syrup business was not going well so Wait decided to branch out into something new. He picked the food industry, his reason being that people eat all the time but they take medicine only when they are sick. Wait and his wife May added strawberry, raspberry, orange, and lemon flavoring to the gelatin powder thus making it one of the first pre-packaged dessert products that needed no additional ingredients or long hours of preparation. It was also May who came up with the name "Jell-O." Given the spelling "Jell-O," May was probably thinking of jelly, not



gelatin, when she dreamed up the name. (Note: Fruit Jell-O is different from fruit jelly because fruit jelly jells because of the pectin in the fruit itself, not from a gelatin additive.)

Unable to successfully market their invention, in 1899 the Waits sold the

business to a neighbor, Orator Francis Woodward, for \$450. Woodward was a school dropout who by the age of 20 had his own business; in 1897 he founded the Genesee Pure Food Company. Among the products Woodward marketed were several patent medicines, Raccoon Corn Plasters, and a roasted coffee substitute called Grain-O.

Initially, Woodward had no more success marketing Jell-O than his predecessors did. Sales were so poor the first year that on one occasion he tried to sell the company. One day while touring the plant with his superintendent, A. S. Nico, they reached the storage section. In front of them cases upon cases of Jell-O were stacked high. They stopped, stood still, and Woodward looked glumly at the stacks of Jell-O. He turned to the superintendent and said "Nico, will you give me \$35 for that Jell-O – the whole business?" Nico refused.

That was fortunate for Woodward because just at the turn of the century Jell-O caught on with the public and sales took off. Beginning in 1902, Woodward's Genesee Pure Food Company placed advertisements in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. These advertisements featured smiling, Gibson Girl-style coifed women who proclaimed Jell-O to be "America's Most Famous Dessert" noting that "it could be served with the simple addition of whipped cream or thin custard," and "if, however, you desire something very fancy, there are hundreds of delightful combinations that can be quickly prepared." Sales that year were \$250,000. Jell-O remained a



minor success until 1904 when Genesee Pure Food Company sent enormous numbers of salesman out into the field to distribute free Jell-O cookbooks, a pioneering marketing tactic at the time which continued for a number of years. By 1906

sales had soared to just under the million dollar mark. Woodward's Genesee Pure Food Company was renamed the Jell-O Company in 1923, and later merged with Postum Cereal to become the General Foods Corporation.

Today the Jell-O brand name is recognized by 95% of Americans and found in 66% of their homes. And just think, when Woodward tried to sell the Jell-O business for just \$35 no one was interested in buying it!

Recipes

Grandma Willis' Coffee Jello

1 package Knox unflavored gelatin
 1/2 cup cold water
 1 3/4 cup cold coffee
 1/3 sugar (or Splenda if you're counting calories)

Dissolve gelatin in 1/4 cup cold water; add 3/4 cup coffee and 1/3 cup sugar; heat to just boil and remove from heat; add 1 cup cold coffee; pour into mold or tea cup for individual servings; chill; serve with whipped cream.

These recipes are from "The Jell-O Girl Gives a Party" recipe book. "The Jell-O Girl" whose image had been used on the Jell-O packages made her marketing debut in 1904 and was used on a number of the Jell-O recipe books.

Plum Pudding

Dissolve a package of Lemon Jell-O in a pint of boiling water, and while it is still hot stir in 3/4 cup Grape Nuts, 3/4 cup seeded raisins, 3/4 cup English walnut meats, 3/4 cup cooked prunes and 1/4 cup citron – all cut fine; 1/2 teaspoonful cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoonful cloves. Salt to taste. Mix and let harden [in a mold]. Serve with sweetened whipped cream or pudding sauce.

Jell-O Tarts

Bake cakes in small tart or muffin tins. When cool remove the center of the cake leaving a hollow case. Dissolve a package of Strawberry or Cherry Jell-O in a pint of boiling water and pour into individual molds to harden. When ready to serve place a spoon of whipped cream in the cake and on this place a mold of Jell-O.

Beauty Salad

Dissolve a package of Raspberry Jell-O in a pint of boiling water and fill individual molds or cups one-fourth full. Let harden. Coarsely chop three bananas, sprinkle with lemon juice, and add half a cup of English walnut meats coarsely chopped. Put the mixture in the molds and pour on rest of Jell-O when it is a cold liquid. Arrange on lettuce with slices of banana sprinkled with nutmeats. Serve with salad dressing.

Did you know?

Fruits that float in Jell-O are: fresh fruits such as apples, bananas, orange and grapefruit sections, sliced peaches and pears, strawberries, and fruit packed in light syrup.

Fruits that sink: seedless grapes and fruits in heavy syrup such as apricots, cherries, fruit cocktail, peaches, pears, and pineapple.

Miss Gabrielle's

Beauty and Fashion for the Socially Astute

Dear Readers - Your newsletter editor, Miss Lau, has asked me to provide you with some advice regarding accessories for your upcoming 1908 Wright Brothers event at Fort Myer. Well, this request comes at a very inopportune time as I have been preparing to take an extended summer vacation (in fact my trunks and hat boxes are all packed and ready to go). However, Miss Lau's request does have some merit and therefore I feel obligated to respond even if it's just a few words in passing.



Ladies, you may have heard this quote: "The only thing that separates us from the animals is our ability to accessorize." Miss Gabrielle certainly agrees; it is the accessories that will show your 1908 outfits to their best advantage. Use your accessories appropriately and you will have the complete package, so to speak. Otherwise, you will look like a 1908 imposter. Here is my best advice on how to complete your outfits.

Jewelry - As hats have gotten larger, earrings have gotten much smaller and more delicate. In fact, many women don't wear any earrings. For those who have pierced ears, small hoops, drops, and balls are in style. You may leave those large dangle earrings from the 1800s in your jewelry box; you'll look 30 years out of date if you wear those.

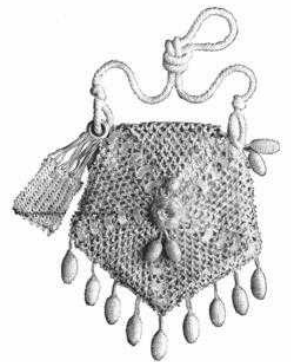


The slide watch chain continues to be fashionable, however, as a March 15, 1908, *New York Times* article notes "so many of the gowns are made with waist and skirt in one piece or are cut to give that effect...the watch chain has been very much shortened, and the watch suspended from it which falls about to the edge of the yoke of the bodices, must be an exquisite example of enamel ware and jewel setting." In other words, it is now considered that the watch will be a decorative accessory much like a locket (another popular Edwardian jewelry item). Large brooches are still worn at the neck (remember that most blouses and dresses have high collars) and often feature gemstones. Gemstones (both natural and man-made) have gained in popularity and are found in all types of jewelry. Amethyst, one of Queen Alexandra's favorite gemstones, is very popular and the *New York Times* articles notes that "rubies are distinctly fashionable at the moment." If you want to make a political statement, try wearing a combination of amethyst (violet) with white pearls and green peridots. These represent the colors of the

suffragette movement; the "g," "w," and "v" stand for "give women the vote." Hand painted brooches (often executed by the wearer herself) featuring flowers, scenes, and portraits are popular and would be appropriate to wear. Circle brooches and bar pins, particularly with lacy filigree designs, stars and crescents are also in vogue.

Gloves - Even though 1908 is considered by many to be quite "modern", a woman must still wear gloves anytime she is out in public. For suits and dresses with long sleeves, a short glove (wrist length) will suffice. However, if your dress has those newly fashionable $\frac{3}{4}$ or elbow length sleeves, then you must wear longer gloves so that none of the arm is showing. The Sears 1908 catalog notes that "Ladies' elbow length gloves are more popular than ever" thus indicating that the ladies of 1908 realized the need to cover their arms. Gloves of crochet, cotton or silk are all appropriate. And ladies, please remember to remove your gloves prior to eating. That is a sign of good breeding.

Purses - The cloth reticule made of material that matches the dress is no longer in fashion. The stylized walking suits in particular require a more sophisticated type of handbag. Beaded, mesh, and leather handbags are all the rage. The 1908 Sears catalog shows 16 different leather handbags including those made of calf, seal, walrus, and lizard grain leather. Crocheted purses such as the one pictured here are also in style. Please remember, however, that summer is over and a white crocheted purse should be replaced with one of a more appropriate color such as cream, tan, or black.



Parasols - Since you'll be outside most of the day, you may want to have a parasol handy. With big hats, parasols must also be large. The small carriage parasols of the 1800s are no longer used.

Walking parasols with long handles, such as the ones shown in this photo are often used and present quite a striking silhouette with the tailored walking suits.



Hats - Hat styles are numerous and would require a much longer dissertation than Miss Gabrielle has time for. Needless to say, a hat is very necessary to complete the perfect outfit and requires much consideration. Hat decorations include large masses of flowers, feathers and plumes, and large silk bows and ribbon which may be held in place with large brooches. One hat advertised in the 1908 Sears catalog is even decorated with a

“wreath of cherries.” Ladies’ hair should be ‘put up’ (no long straight bangs please) and, if possible, waved and puffed, thus allowing the hat to sit on top of the head. And don’t forget those decorative hatpins. You’ll need at least one very long hatpin to keep that hat on your head all day!! Speaking of which, ladies you simply must keep your hat on your head at all times.

Miss Gabrielle trusts that she has given you ladies enough to think about and her carriage awaits. Have an enjoyable day with the Wright Brothers but please stay away from that flying machine contraption. Miss Gabrielle is not at all sure that the concept will ever take off!

A Visit to Lily Dale

A Visit by Penny Crittenden

Lily Dale, New York, is a small enclave in southwestern New York State, about one hour south of Buffalo. It faces Lake Cassadaga on a narrow winding road. Located in Chautauqua County, Lily Dale has a rather unique claim to fame: since 1879 the community has dedicated itself to the religion of Spiritualism (it claims to be the largest center for the religion in the world) and has 40 mediums who call it home. Two hotels, the Maplewood and the Leolyn, were built in the 1880s and offer rooms to those who visit Lily Dale in the summer to attend special events, workshops, or to consult with a medium. There are no telephones, television, or air conditioning in the hotels in keeping with the 19th century atmosphere of the community (we were told the third floor at the Maplewood is the most active in terms of ghosts....) The season runs from June 1 through August. While a few of the mediums stay in Lily Dale all year, most become snowbirds, and relocate in Bonita Springs, Florida, for the southern version of the Lily Dale experience.

In addition to the two hotels mentioned above, several of the mediums rent rooms in their homes to visitors. The houses are mostly frame, small cottages that are one on top of the other, with a few large Victorians. The streets are not wide enough for two cars to pass (actually barely wide enough for a large SUV!) so walking is the best way to get around. There are huge trees, flowers everywhere and a large open park area in the center of the community with benches and gazebos.

Why am I telling you about this place? Because I went there in July to a Victorian séance which was part of their first annual Victorian Times Celebration. My friend Sherry, who lives in Hanover, and I drove to Lily Dale for the weekend of July 12 and 13. It is an easy drive, exactly 8 hours from my house near Warrenton, and is about 30 minutes or so across the Pennsylvania/New York state line. We stayed in a B&B in the Village of Fredonia (which is on Lake Eire) built in 1875 with over 6000 square feet of living space. The grounds were lovely, everything was very lush and green with flowers (particularly different types of lilies) in abundance. The area is rural with vineyards lining both sides of the roads. In the villages, very well kept Victorian homes on large lots line both sides of the streets (think how Falls Church was 50 years ago!)

and the commercial areas reflect architecture of a different era as well.



On Saturday morning we drove the 4 miles from our B&B to the entrance to Lily Dale Assembly. This same gate is in the antique photograph on their course catalog this year which shows crowds of men and women in early 1890s summer attire along with their horses and carriages, strolling the grounds and gathering in small groups. We had appointments for private readings with a third generation medium in the community that morning. The séance was on Saturday evening at 8:15pm and all 140 tickets had been sold (I tried to go last year and it was sold out by the time I got the catalog!).

Our individual, private readings lasted 30 minutes each (apparently the standard in Lily Dale) and without going into detail, both Sherry and I were able to recognize and identify "spirits" the medium said were giving her messages for each of us. There was no crystal ball or anything of the sort....I was in a small room at the back of a lovely Victorian house and the medium sat in a chair facing me as I sat on the sofa. To all appearances, we were simply two friends chatting.

After spending the afternoon antiquing in the villages around Fredonia, we returned to Lily Dale a little after 6:00pm for the séance. We strolled around the community and enjoyed freshly made lemonade and cookies at a small eatery before making our way to the Assembly Hall for the séance. This is also a building original to Lily Dale and serves many purposes, including one of five locations for Sunday services. It is large, with wooden windows that open on three sides, giving the impression of an old carousel. Round tables were set up, each with 6 or 7 chairs, one of which had a pink rose. Each table was numbered. We were told we could sit anywhere we liked but to leave the chair with the rose for the medium. At the appointed time, the mediums came into the hall and went to their assigned tables. We were table 10 and our medium was Debra Boardman. The lights dimmed (there was a votive candle on each table) and the séance began. Each medium chose their method of reading and ours employed smoke readings. She placed a silver candlestick in the center of the table with a single lit candle in it. We were each given a sheet of heavy white cardstock. She showed us how to hold the paper just over the candle flame, not so low as to extinguish it but just enough for the candle to smoke. She then moved the paper all around the flame, essentially making a picture of sorts on the paper from the smoke (think Rohrschach). She then proceeded to interpret the design and give each of us a reading based on the "drawing" and the spirits who came to her. Yours truly managed to put out the

flame which had to be an omen of some sort even though Debra assured me it wasn't!

Almost as soon as we had begun our process, one of the tables in back of us started to move. The medium and all those at her table were standing with just their fingers on the top of the table which moved of its own accord almost 50 feet across the room. The tables were covered in short lace table cloths and there was no one under the table--it moved on its own. Three or four other mediums began the same thing and soon the sound from these tables moving across the wooden floor was extremely loud, to the point where we had to really lean in to hear our medium speak. Suddenly there was a crashing sound and we all turned to see one of the tables on its side, the medium and those at the table standing nearby.

The séance lasted a little over an hour at which point the lights came up a bit and refreshments were served. It had begun to rain while we were inside the Hall and as we walked back to our car I thought about what it must have been like a hundred years ago to have been at a séance in Lily Dale and to have seen what we had just witnessed. I know how amazed I was to see not one but several tables moving (not just gliding but actually tilting from side to side across the floor) and frankly would not have believed it had I not seen it myself. But it happened, it was real, and I saw it.

We have tentative plans to return to Lily Dale next summer. We want to take a workshop on spoon bending. A fellow guest at our B&B had attended one on Friday morning (the catalog tells you to bring your own stainless steel or silverplate spoon) and told us several people had been able to bend their spoons. And who knows, we might just pick a table at the séance that moves....

Victorian Etiquette Primer

It is as unbecoming for a gentleman to sit with legs crossed as it is for a lady.

The following is said to be the correct posture for walking: Head erect – not too rigid – chin in, shoulders back. Do not lean over to one side in walking, standing or sitting...

A lady should not stand with her hand behind her. We could almost say, forget the hands except to keep them clean, including the nails, cordial and helpful. One hand may rest easily in the other.

If hands are allowed to swing in walking, the arc should be limited, and the lady will manage them much more gracefully, if they almost touch the clothing.

Gestures are for emphasis in public speaking; do not point elsewhere, as a rule.

-- *The Household Guide or Practical Helps for Every Home*
Published 1893

Welcome New Members

Debra Roth, 503 No. Roosevelt Boulevard, #415, Falls Church, VA 22044, 703-867-7406, dedrar1@erols.com

Updates:

Diane Gatchell new email address: frediane@verizon.net

Dee Beck new email address: dbrenwench@yahoo.com

Meet Your Fellow Members

Contributed by Maryll Kleibrink

Christy Beck

A resident of Falls Church, Christy Been had often noticed the Victorian Society at Falls Church's antics around town and thought that it would be fun to don some Victorian garb and join us in some of our activities. She admits to not being very knowledgeable about the Victorian era, but is keen to learn more. Her first order of business is to get together a period outfit. A C.P.A., Christy works for Clifton Gunderson, a public accounting firm with many federal clients. Her husband, Nicky, is also a C.P.A. and works for the Securities and Exchange Commission. Christy was born in Chicago, but is practically a native of this area since her parents moved here when she was just three years old. Travel is her favorite hobby.

Anne Jacobs

Originally from Chicago, Anne came to the Washington area in 1942 when her husband, who was in the Navy, was stationed here for his first tour of duty. After he retired in 1958, they moved back to Illinois, but felt themselves drawn to return to this area less than 10 years later. "I don't think there's anything more beautiful than Washington and Virginia," explains Anne. Anne has been collecting antiques for 30 years, which is why she is so interested in the Victorian era. It was at a tea at Cherry Hill Farmhouse with the Questers Club that Anne met our Past President, Linda Lau, and asked about becoming a member of our Chapter. When she's not taking tea or antiquing, Anne enjoys playing golf and participates in a book club.

Victorian Society Members Attention, Please!

Do you know of upcoming Victorian or historical events; have facts or information relating to the Victorian era; know of a book relating to the Victorian era; or have any type of Victorian-related information that would be of interest to our readers? If so, please submit to Linda Lau at victdelit@aol.com for publication in our newsletter. The following members have contributed to this newsletter: Karla Pringle, Margo Shiffert, Anne Willis, Maryll Kleibrink, Midge Wang, Shirley Camp, and Penny Crittenden.

In the News!

Queen Victoria's Underwear Sold at Auction



It seems that we are not the only ones who are fans of the Queen. In July Barbara Rusch, a commercial property manager in Toronto, paid \$9,000 for Queen Victoria's bloomer and \$8,000 for a chemise belonging to the Queen. Ms. Rusch told the news "Yes, Queen Victoria's

underwear is the latest addition to my collection of thousands of items related to her period."

When asked what drove her to collect items from Queen Victoria she said "Three decades ago, I got interested in the social history of the 19th century. And nobody symbolized that period better than Queen Victoria." Rusch, the president of the Ephemera Society of Canada feels that "Posters, photographs and Christmas cards all tell a story about the people who lived in the 19th century."

Since then Rusch has collected items related to the Queen and her reign. The most precious items in her collection are a bracelet made from the Queen's daughter's hair, a pair of pink silk stockings that the Queen wore while her husband was alive, and a swatch of her silk dress laced with beadings. She said that her collection also includes menus the Queen ordered for royal weddings, the Queen's images used in advertisements at the time, and beautiful greeting cards she sent and received.

The handmade underpants with a waist size of 50 inches, date back to the 1890s and bear the monogram "VR" for Victoria Regina. They are open-crotch, with separate legs joined by a drawstring at the waist, which as we know was a popular style at the time. The chemise has a bust size of 66 inches showing that the Queen was a large woman even though she was said to be only 5 feet tall. Auctioneer Charles Hanson said that the Queen's underpants belonged to "a very big lady of quite small stature with a very wide girth."

The undergarments belonged to a family whose ancestor had been one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting. At her death, Queen Victoria's huge wardrobe, including her underwear, was distributed to members of the royal household. These personal garments are now found in both private and public collections. Hanson said that it was exciting to know the provenance noting "They are monogrammed and crested and we know that they are hers." The Queen's nightgown also sold at the auction for \$11,000 presumably to another bidder.



And just how would Queen Victoria feel about her underwear being sold at a public auction. Our guess is that she would not be amused.

Progressive Fundraising Tea

A BIG Success Submitted by Midge Wang

June 14th, a lovely warm summer Saturday found 30 some Victorians dressed in flowered hats and summer whites for the ladies and blazers and straw boaters for the gentlemen, all busily setting up three gardens for our Progressive Garden Tea party. This was the culmination of many weeks of planning and work.

Happily, the gardens all looked their best and our guests seemed to be very pleased with the afternoon and with the delicious sandwiches, scones, and sweets served with all the trimmings and topped off with champagne. The Fairfax Jubil-Aires Barbershop Chorus singing at the second garden added the perfect touch.

The day was a complete success as we beat a threatened rain storm, sold all 100 tickets, and met our two goals of showcasing Victorian homes and gardens in the city (not just the 3 on the tour but many other houses the guests passed enroute) and finally we raised enough in funds to complete the funding for two city historical markers for the Falls Church history trail!!! *In fact, at the July board meeting, the VSFC board approved the funding of two trail markers – one for the DePutron House and one for Mt. Hope. Both of these residences were on the Historic Commission's list of Falls Church places to receive a marker and we are extremely pleased to be able to fund markers for these two houses.*

The society thanks members who purchased tickets to support our efforts and a very special thank you to our members who volunteered their gardens, worked on the planning phase, baked, cooked, donated food, decorated and served that day in the three gardens; and in some cases, all of the above: Ron Anzalone, Dee Beck, Ron and Linda Blank, Nick Byrne, Shirley Camp, Barbara Cram, Frank D'Aquila, Priscilla and Alan Gibson, Jan Grimes, Mack Gross, Terry Hooper, Pam Jones, Madge Karickhoff, Sue Kelly, Maryll Kleibrink, Gus Knapp, Marilyn Lang, Linda Lau, Mary Jane Lyons, Charlotte Needham, Dorothy O'Rourke, Sue Perlin, Karla Pringle, Chris Riherd, Marcia and Gil Seigert, Cathy and Kent Taylor, Keith Thurston, Donna Vick, Midge Wang, Anne Willis, Sun Ying Yeh, and Mary Lou and Richard Ziller. Without this wonderful member support, none of our initiatives would be possible. And now, here are some photos of this special fundraising event:





The Fairfax Jubil-Aires performed on the front porch of the DePutron House.



Ashley Taylor with 'maid' Anne Willis; Terry Hooper, Linda Lau, and Sir Oliver stroll in the Mt. Hope Garden



Some of our guests really got into the spirit and dressed in Victorian attire.

One of the delicious foods served at the tea was a tasty cold peach soup. It was a perfect start to a warm summer day tea. Here's the recipe we used:

COLD PEACH SOUP

Blend together

- 18-20 canned Peach Slices, drained
(Del Monte Light Syrup is suggested)
- 3 Tablespoons Peach Syrup with enough Fat-free
Half & Half to make 1 1/2 cups liquid
- 3 Tablespoons Instant Vanilla Pudding mix
- 1/4 Tsp Almond Extract

Makes 4-5 servings

Labor Day – A Dedication to the Contributions of the American Worker

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883. It is unclear as to who was the first to suggest a Labor Day celebration.

Some records show that Peter J. McGuire, general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a co-founder of the American Federation of Labor, was first in suggesting a day to honor those "who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold." However many believe that Matthew Maguire, a machinist, founded the holiday. Recent research seems to support the contention that Matthew Maguire, later the secretary of Local 344 of the International Association of Machinists in Paterson, N.J., proposed the holiday in 1882 while serving as secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York. What is clear is that the Central Labor Union adopted a Labor Day proposal and appointed a committee to plan a demonstration and picnic.

In 1884 the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday, as originally proposed, and the Central Labor Union urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a "workingmen's holiday" on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial centers of the country.

Through the years the nation gave increasing emphasis to Labor Day. The first governmental recognition came through municipal ordinances passed during 1885 and 1886. From them developed the movement to secure state legislation. The first state bill was introduced into the New York legislature, but the first to become law was passed by Oregon on February 21, 1887. During the year four more states -- Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York -- created the Labor Day holiday by legislative enactment. By 1894, 26 other states had adopted the holiday in honor of workers, and on June 28 of that year, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories.

[Source: *United States Department of Labor*]

The Victorian Society at Falls Church

A chapter of the Victorian Society of America

P.O. Box 7436, Falls Church, VA 22040

Vicsofc@hotmail.com

Officers

Gil Siegert, President 703-780-8316
Midge Wang, Vice President 703-534-8394
Terry Hooper, Treasurer 703-241-2751
Shirley Camp, Secretary 703-241-0972

Board Members

Deanna Beck, Penny Crittenden, Mack Gross,
Anne Willis

Membership – Gus Knapp 703-241-2751
Newsletter Publisher – Linda Lau 703-425-0292