

Annual Membership Meeting Tuesday, May 18th, 2010

The meeting was called to order in the Carriage House at 7 PM by vice-president, June Zappa. June announced the slate of officers for the next year:

June Zappa, President
Chris Hutchinson, Vice President
Doug Wenny, Treasurer
Judy Filipkowski, Secretary

No nominations were made from the floor and the slate of officers was approved. The new members of the board, Joe Dell'Olio and Beth Morgana were announced and approved.

Doug Wenny, treasurer, announced the news that our Delaware Community Foundation funds have gone up by \$40,000 since the beginning of this fiscal year. We have \$244,000 as of March, 2010.

June presented a summary of events for the past year.

The Murder Mystery Dinner was a great success. The Irish Night was cancelled due to lack of attendance. She thanked the committee members for all their work and presented them with Irish mugs.

The fund raising efforts are in need of a committee to plan more events.

Grant writing efforts will continue to find funds to save the conservatory. June attended a workshop today with Representative. Castle and received a lot of information. She will head up the committee to help write the grants.

The power point about Rockwood is ready to be presented to New Castle County Council.

She thanked Paul Stoffer and Margaret (Bo) Twelves for their service and dedication to the Friends Board. They are both retiring from the board.

The lecture for the evening was "Bringing History to Light", about the Rockwood archives at the University of Delaware.

Rebecca Johnson Melvin, the librarian in the special collections made some introductory remarks.

Mark Lasner, a library staff member, was instrumental in acquiring this collection for the university. His goal is to preserve it while allowing access to researchers. She said, "The goal of an archive is to be used."

Matt Davis is the graduate student who is researching and organizing the collection. He is a Ph. D. candidate, having already received at B.A. in History from Susquehanna University and a M.A. at the U.of D. He has received the John Sweeney Fellowship Fund for 2009-2010.

Matt said:

The archives is 160 linear feet or as Grace Hess said, 6 hearse loads.(Hearses were used to transport the collection to the Historical Society of Delaware, where it stayed for over ten years.)

The material covers materials from the 17th C. to 1965 with both Shipley and Bringham family materials.

The goal is to:

Arrange and identify

Describe and summarize for finding aids

Preserve appropriately with allowing access to the public

About 75% was already completed by the Rockwood staff and volunteers
He displayed a sample finding aid. The Rockwood finding aid will be available on the Special Collections Library website when it is complete.

Dr. Joseph Bringhurst was the recipient of a letter from Thomas Jefferson in reference to the death of John Dickinson. Dr. Bringhurst (1767-1834) was born and trained in Philadelphia, moving to Wilmington in 1793. He married Deborah Ferris in 1799. He was appointed postmaster of Wilmington, a patronage appointment, by Jefferson in 1803.

His letters are found in many other collections of his peers including Henry Clay, Robert Fulton, and Benjamin Franklin.

Dickinson's death was chronicled by Bringhurst as he spent his last days, staying as his friend and physician.

There are also letters from Dickinson to Deborah as well as to Joseph's father, James and to Joseph Shipley.

Dickinson was considered a founding father. At first he opposed the war due to the lack of the colonies' preparedness. He ultimately joined the war. He was the first president of Delaware and also of Pennsylvania. He donated land for Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA in 1783. He was a Quaker and freed his slaves in 1777.

The letter in the Rockwood collection is an original with the copy being at the National Archives. Matt showed us a picture of the copying machine Jefferson used, which had two pens, writing with one while an attached pen on a rod wrote on another piece of paper.

So, we are most proud to have this in our collection.

Questions followed the lecture and we then adjourned for refreshments.

Judy Filipkowski
Secretary