

# *Rhode Island Historical Society*

190<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
November 16, 2011

Report for the Fiscal Year  
2010-2011



## Message from our President



Welcome to your Historical Society's 2011 Annual Meeting and Annual Report. Tonight marks a significant milestone in the annals of the Society as Dr. C. Morgan Grefe, the first female Executive Director in our long history, will share her vision for 2012 and beyond.

Fiscal 2011 was a very good year in many ways: total public support increased by nearly 30% over 2010, admissions income was up close to 10%, and membership dues were up slightly, all in one of the worst economies in the nation! You, our members, our supporters, our partners, make this happen. Without you, the work of the Society would come to a grinding halt. Thank you.

What makes a Society supporter loyal? For one, it might be the opportunity to attend the Textile Preservation Workshop at the Library; for another it might be the Museum of Work and Culture gallery exhibition "The Preservation Movement Then and Now." I may look forward to the George M. Cohan Walking Tour, while you dream of *Summer Concerts under the Elms* at the John Brown House. The depth and breadth of our offerings are extraordinary, but you know that. That is why you are a member. We have something for everyone with an interest in history.

Under Morgan's energizing leadership you can look forward to new collaborations, new programs, and new directions, all of which will take the Society to great heights. The staff here is second to none, and they, together with our dedicated board of directors, stand ready to support her as she leads the Society into a future that looks bright indeed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger N. Begin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roger N. Begin  
President of the Board, RIHS

## Message from our Executive Director



Hello, and thank you for reading our Annual Report. I hope that this report captures just some of the excitement of the last year and encourages you to become an even bigger part of our community. In the pages that follow, you will see brief updates about some of our activities throughout 2010 and 2011. You will also see the names of our donors—both those who provided monetary donations and those who gave of their time and historical collections. These individuals make the Rhode Island Historical Society possible. Their desire to preserve and share the history of our amazing state sustains our organization and inspires us in the work we do every day. I can't thank them enough.

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As a historian by training, but an administrator by vocation, the Annual Meeting allows me to merge these two sides: I get to look back on the year, but always with an eye to the future. Like all historians, studying past events allows me to see why they were needed and done in a particular moment, but also to think of how they might be made more vital and relevant in years to come. What new questions do we have? What new contexts?

To list all that we have done would take far too many pages, but here are some of the highlights of our work since we met last year:

### **The Museum of Work & Culture**

The Museum of Work & Culture has been a hotbed of activity this year. In addition to its typical bustling tours and programs, the museum text panels have had a facelift. Intern Brendan Shanahan researched the push and pull factors that brought so many French-Canadians to the United States and yet kept others north of our border. His research was turned into a new narrative that shares a more complex yet universal story of dynamics that separated families across borders and oceans. In addition to this change, you can now tour the museum and follow the story in French, a long wished-for project undertaken by museum co-director Anne Conway.

We also spent the last year celebrating the new *Going to Work* exhibit at the Museum of Work & Culture. Groups representing Greek, Mexican, Chinese, Portuguese, Polish and many other ethnic backgrounds shared their traditional music, dance, food and childhood pastimes with us as we broadened the story of what it meant for so many groups who migrated here to live and work in the Blackstone Valley in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

### **The John Brown House Museum**

At the John Brown House Museum, the new Education and Visitor Services Manager, Dalila Goulart, and the Tourism Manager, Barbara Barnes, merged our museum and walking tour training with the intention of broadening our perspectives both inside and outside of the museum. To understand the John Brown House's history is to understand its context in Providence. And to contemplate College Hill requires the careful inspection of individual lives and pasts that the

museum affords. Our guides now have an even deeper appreciation for the varied history of the Hill and a more nuanced approach to telling its many stories.

Our walking tours also went in a new direction this year as we began our school programs with our very own “Avi” tour. Under the direction of Barbara Barnes, hundreds of Rhode Island’s school children were immersed in the stories of history, slavery, and the built environment of College Hill. We think it is just the beginning of engaging our state’s young people in a form of learning that gets them out of the classroom and out of doors to help history and literature come to life for them.

### **The Library**

Our Library has had an exciting year of expanded programming and reach, as well. Reference Librarian Lee Teverow organized genealogy workshops and lectures examining the written, visual and vital records of people of Italian, Jewish, African-American and Native American ancestry--to record crowds. Lee tells me that, in fact, the best attended programs last year were Christine DeLucia’s “Trails of Memory in the Narragansett Country: Native and Settler Place-Traditions in Rhode Island after King Philip’s War” and Paul Robinson’s “An Archaeology: Village Life in the Narragansett Country up to 1680.” More than one hundred people attended the latter.

### **The Newell D. Goff Center for Education and Public Programs**

And speaking of record crowds, the Goff Center for Education and Public Programs spent 2010 and 2011 with more teachers than ever! A million-dollar grant from the Federal Department of Education’s Teaching American History program has allowed us to work with more than fifty teachers from twelve districts in Northern Rhode Island--a huge undertaking coordinated by Marie Parys. These educators spent afternoons, evenings and Saturdays contemplating primary documents and monographs and spent one week of the summer with some of the best scholars of Early American History, including Gordon Wood, Karl Jacoby, Lin Fischer, Joanne Pope Melish and Marie Jenkins Schwartz. For twenty-seven of these teachers, their experience culminated with a three-day trip to Philadelphia to work with the National Park Service at Independence Mall, the President’s House, Valley Forge and the Constitution Center.

Thirty more teachers from fifteen states came to Rhode Island for two weeks to participate in a National Endowment for the Humanities summer institute for school teachers examining the role of slavery in the rise of New England. This institute, co-directed by Professor Joanne Pope Melish and myself, brought professors working in all aspects of the fields of Native American and African American history in early New England to Brown’s campus and public history sites throughout the region not only to contemplate this history in new ways, but also how to teach it.

### **The Declaration of Independence**

As many of you know, last May, in honor of Rhode Island Independence Day, we had the honor of hosting one of the six remaining original copies of the Declaration of Independence at the John Brown House Museum. Then owned by producer Norman Lear, this copy, lovingly called “the People’s document,” was on a tour of all fifty states—and Rhode Island was number forty-nine. In little more than a twenty-four hour period, 1200 people streamed into the museum. Those in line were entertained by staff, volunteers, and, most notably, Revolutionary War re-enactors who set up an encampment in the front yard. It was a joyous and reverential day for one of our most important documents, and a day that proves that history is relevant, engaging, and emotional for people from elementary school to retirement communities.

### Visit us on-line

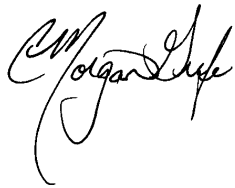
It is very likely that you read about these programs on our newly redesigned website. Besides being user-friendly and attractive, the site also has some new features, including a searchable database of articles from our journal, *Rhode Island History*. Now, if you know an author or title, or even just part of a title, you can find an article from 1942 to 2008 and download it as a PDF right to your desktop. Already, professors at schools like the University of Rhode Island and Providence College are using these articles in the classrooms--for free. This is just the beginning of ways in which you will be able to interact with the RIHS on-line in the days to come.

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This is merely a smattering of what our dedicated, and very busy, staff has been up to. It's important to note that so much of the work to collect, preserve and interpret Rhode Island's History takes place behind the scenes. You may not have met our Director of Collections, Kirsten Hammerstrom, but if you have been to our museums or library, you have seen her brilliant work and that of her staff. If you've needed information on our concerts or our membership, you've talked to Mary Lou Upham. Perhaps you gave us a gift or helped us with our audit. If so, you have gotten to know our Director of Finance, Charmyne Goodfellow, and her team in the business office.

Maintaining our mission and striving to become the type of institution that Rhode Island needs and deserves in the twenty-first century takes many hands and hearts—too many hardworking staff members to name here.

And it takes your help, too. Without the support of our members, we would not be able to do our work. We thank you for being part of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Together, we can make history.



C. Morgan Grefe, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

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# Rhode Island Historical Society

## Statement of Financial Position

June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011

ASSETS:	2011	2010
Cash and cash Equivalents:		
Operating	1,077,828	1,004,362
Grant restricted	125,064	73,622
Receivables:		
Grants	26,660	20,855
Contributions	41,339	170,963
Pledges	45,000	
Other	20,181	9,055
Inventories	19,884	22,711
Prepaid Expenses	10,109	33,214
Investments, at fair value	10,700,135	8,185,633
Property and Equipment, net	2,628,987	2,734,221
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,695,187</b>	<b>12,254,636</b>
LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable	34,861	56,302
Accrued liabilities		
Payroll and payroll taxes	115,981	54,742
Other	15,000	13,000
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>165,842</b>	<b>124,044</b>
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted:		
General	805,091	292,174
Board Designated	3,762,683	3,746,891
Total	4,567,774	4,039,065
Temporarily Restricted	1,327,659	528,040
Permanently Restricted	8,633,912	7,563,487
Total net assets	14,529,345	12,130,592
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,695,187</b>	<b>12,254,636</b>

## Statement of Activities

June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011

	Unrestricted - General	Unrestricted - Board Designated	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
<b>PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE:</b>					
Contributions	414,064		112,709	70,425	597,198
Grants	486,009		246,779	1,000,000	1,732,788
Bequest income	14,084				14,084
Total Public Support	914,157		359,488	1,070,425	2,344,070
<b>Revenue:</b>					
Program revenues	37,076	57,302	1,376		95,754
Membership dues	59,648				59,648
In-kind contributions	75,761				75,761
Admissions income	67,872				67,872
Publications and book sales	9,102				9,102
Administrative fees	25,276				25,276
Investment income, net	1,132,375	172,612	612,646		1,917,633
Rental functions income	21,132				21,132
Miscellaneous income	2,830				2,830
Net assets released from restrictions	423,782	(249,891)	(173,891)		-
Total Revenue	1,854,854	(19,977)	440,131		2,275,008
<b>Special Events</b>					
Revenue	76,112				76,112
Expense	(29,863)				(29,863)
	46,249				46,249
<b>Total public support and revenue</b>	<b>2,815,260</b>	<b>(19,977)</b>	<b>799,619</b>	<b>1,070,425</b>	<b>4,665,327</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>					
<b>Program Services:</b>					
Library services	455,219				455,219
Museum program	326,003				326,003
Woonsocket museum	265,365				265,365
Education program	360,172				360,172
Total program services	1,406,759				1,406,759
<b>Supporting services:</b>					
Development	231,104				231,104
Management and general	628,711				628,711
Total supporting services	859,815				859,815
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,266,574</b>				<b>2,266,574</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>548,686</b>	<b>(19,977)</b>	<b>799,619</b>	<b>1,070,425</b>	<b>2,398,753</b>

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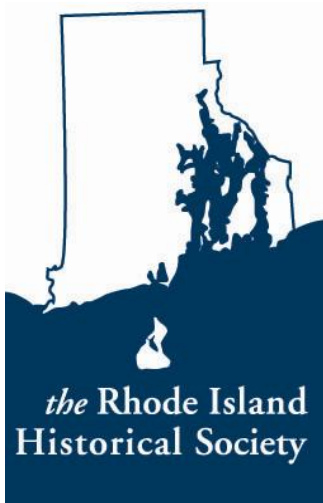
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