

THE SLOOP'S LOG

Newsletter of the Chebeague Island Historical Society

Spring, 2002

Volume V, Issue 1



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Phil Jordan

Our grand project, the Museum of Chebeague History, has advanced from dreaming, planning and negotiating to actual construction-in-progress. Mark Evans of the Thaxter Company has removed the garage doors and is preparing the interior for new construction and restoration in the Schoolhouse and Annex. Work will continue, according to the plans and specifications that CIHS members saw last summer, during the next five months with completion expected in August. By the time that summer residents return to the Island, there will be plainly visible signs of transformation of the District No. 9 Schoolhouse into the Museum of Chebeague History, and all of us -- year-round and seasonal alike -- should be able to celebrate together in August the realization of our shared ambition as we admire the new Museum.

Completion of the Museum will provide wonderful opportunities for volunteers. We anticipate organizing on-site work parties to help with exterior painting, grounds clean-up and enhancements, moving the items from the collection now temporarily stored in several barns back into the building, and other tasks. Here is the opportunity for the Island community to take ownership of our Museum.

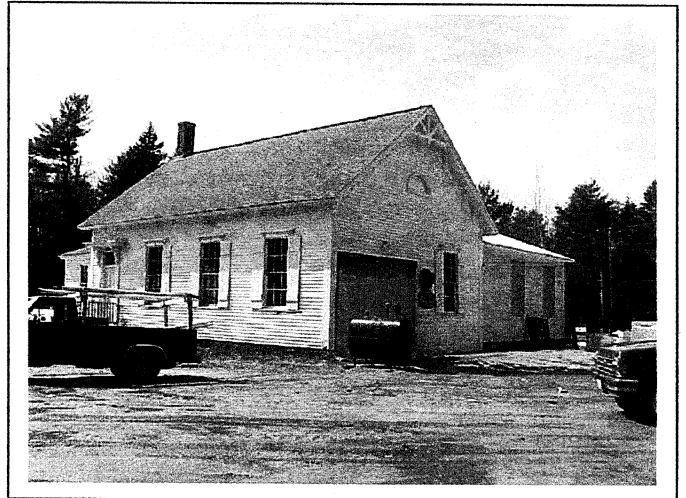
This summer will also be time to gather new artifacts for the Museum's collections. Since the completion of the controlled storage area and the heating of the Museum may be delayed, donors of items to the collection should think of providing durable items this year and perishable ones later. We will notify the community about donations to the collection as the opening of the Museum approaches. If the experience of other island museums is any example, we can expect that contributions to the collections will continue over many years.

Now that the Museum of Chebeague History is becoming a reality we all have the opportunity and responsibility to make it the best of its kind.



Architect Carol Wilson, President Phil Jordan, and Kenneth Hamilton discuss brick replacement in front of schoolhouse

All of the garage doors and front annex windows have been removed. A window will be returned to the front of the school house where it once was. The main entrance will be to the left of the removed annex windows.



Cumberland, Maine December 3, 1835

“This certifies that according to my opinion Ebenezer Hill of the Town of Cumberland is sufficiently qualified to instruct a common school in District No. 9 on Chebeague Island in all branches reasonably taught in this school.”

Charles Hill - Examining School Committee

REMEMBERING OUR VETERANS

By Kenneth Hamilton

More than a half a century has passed since the end of WW II, and many of those who could speak of or write of it have been lost forever." {Quote from LIFE magazine} The island history is poorer for not knowing what may have happened to our island boys and girls who were called to defend our country. And so, in pursuing that premise, I offer what I have been able to discover about a few more island veterans.



Willis Everett Cleaves deceased

"Here comes Willis" was the cry I remember of hearing as a youngster growing up in the "center " on Chebeague. We would all rush out of doors and search the sky for the two-winged plane as it dived and soared over head. Willis liked to "buzz" the center where the stores were located. He was friendly with my Dad as well as Henry Bowen, Bert Mansfield, and George Leonard. My recollection is that they were not always military planes. I do recall that over the years the planes progressed from the two winged biplane to the single wing to finally the Navy plane with the starred wing giving you one quick glimpse before it was out of sight. Willis was admired by everyone long before the war years----that is not quite accurate because my grandmother was terrified of anything roaring in the sky. She would grab all the grandchildren within reach and run as fast as she could for the safety of the house.

Willis had the average young boy's dislike of school and tried to skip school on occasion but his grandmother, who according to his daughter, used to chase him back to school after discovering his indiscretions, usually thwarted his plans. Barbara also relates the story of her father taking a nest of mice to school in his lunch box. We can only imagine the turmoil that this must have caused.

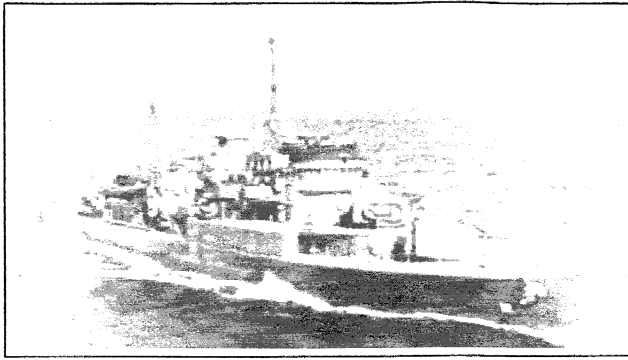
The following information has been condensed from K. Tinker notes as well as newspaper clippings: Willis received his early education on Chebeague and Portland schools. He graduated from Portland High School in 1920, and from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. After graduation he was assigned to the U.S.S. Nevada and this was followed by duty on various ships. He took his flight training at the Pensacola Naval Air Station 1926-27. He specialized at Harvard in graduate work in radio engineering.

From 1933-35 he was assigned to duty at Pearl Harbor where he was in charge of radio communication for his squadron and for the station. In the spring of 1941 he was assigned to the U.S.S. Albemarle in North Atlantic water and rendered invaluable assistance as Radio Communications Officer in the Navy's fight against the German submarine warfare. [It is a bit of a coincidence that my brother ,Theron, also served on the Abermarle a few years later 1949-50] In the spring of 1942 as Commander he was assigned to another seaplane tender U.S.S. Casco named for Casco Bay, Maine. Soon after he took the Casco out into the North Pacific, she was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. The ship was badly damaged having a hole the size of a room amidships causing the ship to settle four feet and resulting in some casualties. The tender carried 90,000 gal. of high-test aviation fuel stored on either side of the hole damage.

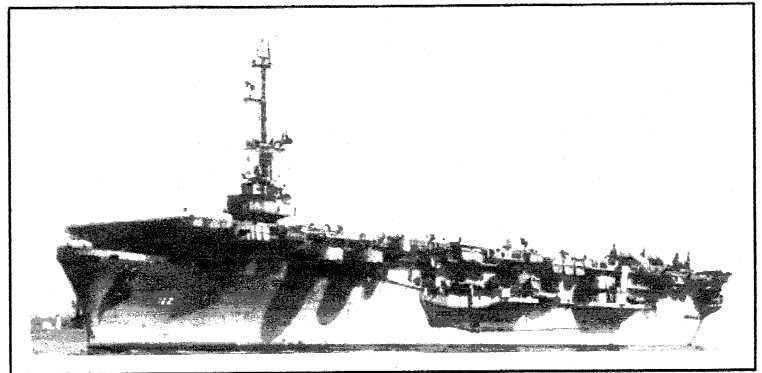
For his expert handling of the Casco , and saving her, and for gallantry in action, he was promoted to Captain, and awarded the Silver Star. His citation reads: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as commanding officer of a warship. When his ship was torpedoed by an enemy submarine, Commander Cleaves dirtied maneuvers and gunfire of his vessel with such outstanding professional skill and inspiring leadership that he enabled the officers and men of his command to drive off the submersible meanwhile effecting precautions to prevent the ship from sinking or being destroyed from fire. After all motive power was lost and he was forced to ship anchors, he succeeded in beaching his vessel without additional damage or loss of life, and subsequently supervised the essential salvage operations."

After He got his ship back to Seattle and repaired he again took the Casco to the Aleutian Campaign and the Battle of Attu. From the Aleutians he returned to his home in Washington, D.C. where he saw his three months old daughter, Barbara, who had been born while he was in the thick of the campaign. In July, 1943 he was sent to Florida as the commanding officer of the Daytona Beach Naval Air Station. He later was given command of the Escort Carrier, U.S.S. Palau, built in Tacoma, Wash. and commissioned in 1946.

Willis Cleaves retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral. Rear Admiral Cleaves was the father of Barbara Marks and an Uncle to Jane Frizzell. His sister, Alice Cleaves Blackwell , died in 1999. Interestingly enough when Willis died his wife was able to obtain a piece of granite from Aaron Cleaves wharf to serve as a headstone. It would have been Willis 'grandfather who originally brought the stone to the island on an island stone sloop.



USS Casco (AVP - 12)



CVE - 122 USS Palau

Donald Wentworth Ross

Deceased

Don Ross graduated from Chebeague High School in 1942 in a class of nine students and immediately joined the naval air Service. [For the interest of our readers , this class included Don ,Clifton Thompson, James Hamilton, Norman Calder, Victoria Smith, Katherine Mansfield, Geraldine Ross, Ruth Hamilton, and Martha Hamilton] He attended Aviation Machinist Mate school at the Naval Air Station at Jacksonville, Florida This school trained him as a flight engineer and ground mechanic.

As an Aviation Machinist Mate Third Class he was assigned to the Naval Patrol Squadron 31 based at Quonset Point, Rhode Island. Later he was attached to Patrol Bomber Scouting Squadron VB 105 and FAW -7, Other air stations at which he served was at Chincoteague, Virginia and at St. Marys, California. {Don's military service is a classic example of lost or unknown history . Don's wife has been able supply some information but details are unfortunately not known.}

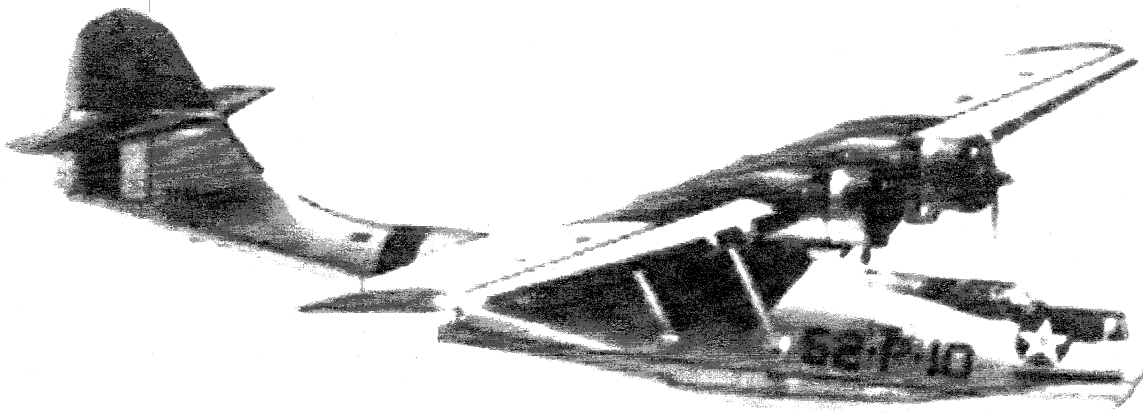
We know that Don was shot down at least once (probably more) while flying in a PBY Catalina Patrol Bomber. I did talk with him briefly when he was home on R&R leave after this first shoot down . He had only superficial injuries from this incident.

I can only relate that his records show and that he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with four gold bars before he left active duty in February of 1947. By this time he had a rate of Aviation Machinist Mate First Class.

His citation for his Air Medal reads as follows: "For meritorious achievement in aerial flight as Aircrewman in a Patrol Bomber, in Patrol Bombing Squadron One Hundred Five, during the anti-submarine patrols in the Bay of Biscay, from Oct. 1943 to May 1944. Participating in numerous missions under adverse weather conditions and in areas patrolled by enemy fighters, Ross contributed materially to the defeat of hostile U-Boat activities in the Battle of the Atlantic. His devotion to duty was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

His citation for the Distinguished Flying Cross reads: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as Aircrewman of a United States Naval Patrol Bomber Plane in Anti-Submarine operations in the Bay of Biscay and the Approaches to the United Kingdom from August 17, 1943, to June 25, 1944. Completing his twentieth mission during this period, Ross contributed materially to the success of his squadron. His courage and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service

After being discharged Don married and made his residence in the state of Washington where he worked in security for a major airline. Don's father, George, was a half brother to Elsie Hamilton and Bill Ross. Ray Hamilton is Don's uncle and to I owe much for helping me obtain information.



By Jim Millinger

The "Winter Crew" has been busy. We presented to the Board, and the Board approved, the accession and deaccession recommendations made this autumn by the Collections Committee. We have been busy in the archives and physically active, one again, in moving most of our material collection.

Martha Hamilton is heading up a subcommittee and is working to identify many of the old photographs of Chebeaguers --long past-- which are in the collections held by the Historical Society and the Library. Others have been going through our archives searching for materials on the schoolhouse.

We have been doing some research on the teachers and pupils who went to the school, and have found some interesting tidbits which will enliven our tale of the historical use of the building. Who was it who Mr. Libby literally "kicked out" the schoolhouse north door with such energy that Mr. Libby had to go home at the noon break to get the crotch and seat of his pants sewn up?

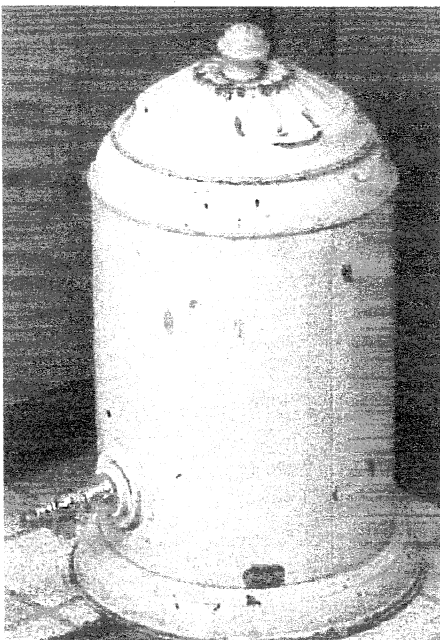
Before we turned the building over to John Thaxter & Company, we did some careful research on "the way it was". Despite its use as a Town Garage, much of the evidence of its use as a schoolhouse -- first a one room multi-grade school, and then in 1934 conversion into a two room Junior and Senior High School -- is still on the walls: the old black (actual) boards, the initials of students carefully carved into window sills, the boarded over holes in the floor which were the toilet facilities (boys and girls) separated by a thin wall but each with a window, and only those who know how many peep-holes in between!

While the weather was still good this autumn, a number of former students walked through the building, telling their stories of their days in this well-used building which is now on the way to becoming both school house of the past and museum of the future for the island. One of them, Ken Hamilton, attended the school both in grade school and in high school and then ended up teaching and being principal of Chebeague's own "little red school house".

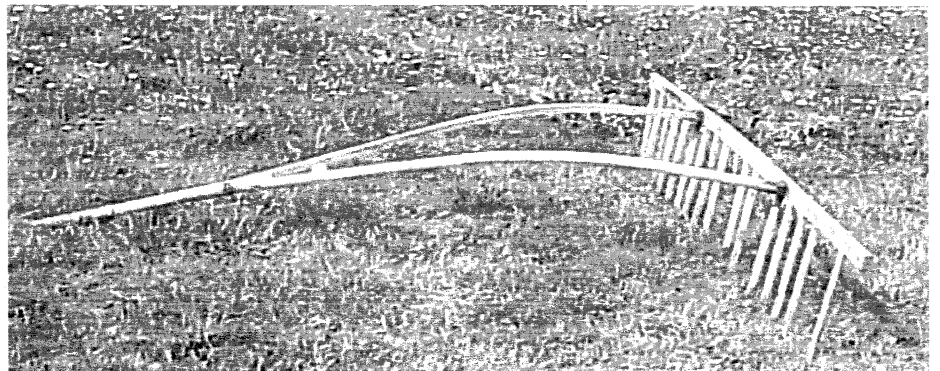
On the physical side, our collection of material objects is on its next to last leg before finding its final resting place in the Museum. Before the transformation of the District #9 School to the Chebeague Island Museum of Chebeague History could start, we had to remove all the material objects which we have been storing there. Some of the smaller items are being stored in Bertha Gray's barn and some of the artifacts which came from the Higgins Farm have been placed back there in the Dayton's barn for safekeeping until we move them into the Museum this summer.



One Hole of the Two Holer

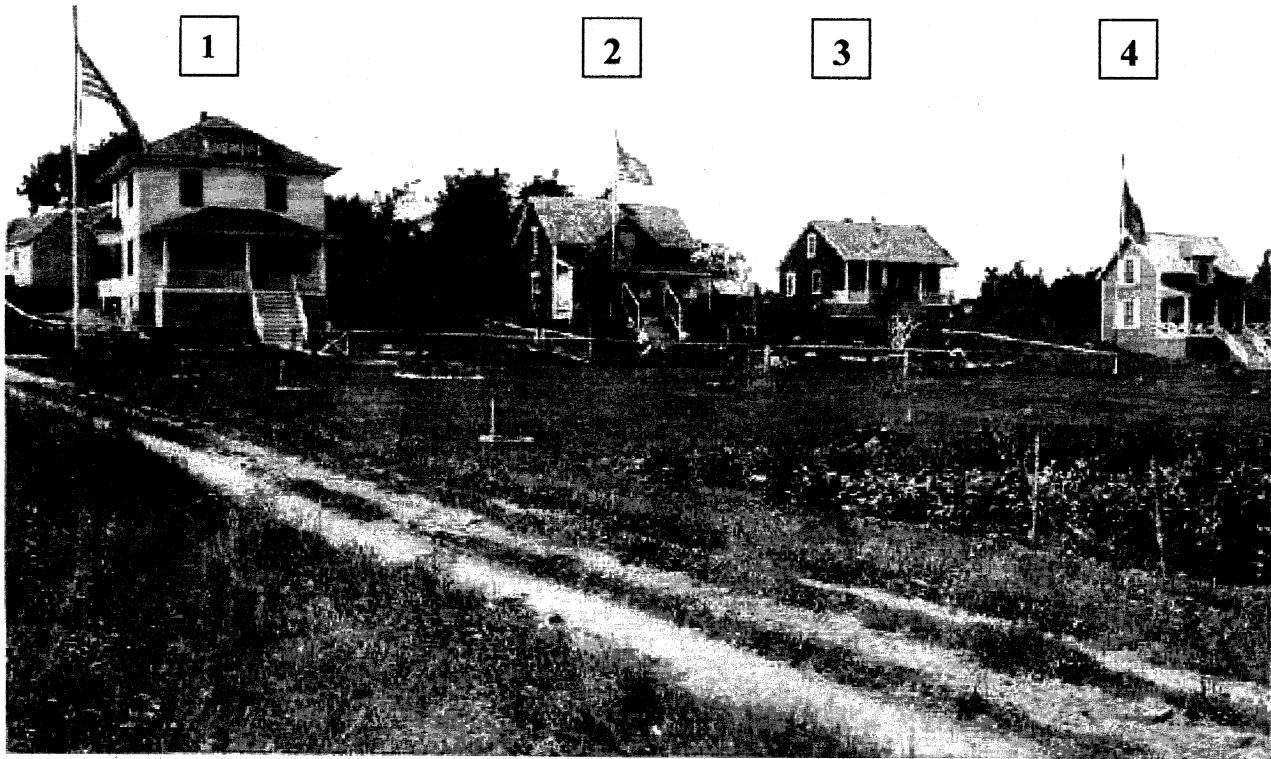


A hay rake from the collection



This water cooler will be returned to the schoolhouse when renovations are completed

THEN.....



FLAG AVENUE, CHEBEAGUE ISLAND, MAINE.

FLAG AVENUE RESIDENTS

"Three sisters lived within shouting distance of each other off of Flag Ave. They were daughters of Alonzo Hamilton who lived in the house now occupied by Charlotte St.Cyr. Ida (Mrs. William Stilphen) lived where Eric Weagle now lives. Myra (Married name was Craig) owned the house just over the hill above Eric,s which was moved to the present location in 1944, and Emily (Mrs. George Leonard) resided in a home attached to Leonard"s Store now demolished."



This house is no longer on Flag Avenue.



WHERE IS IT NOW?

1 Joan Robinson

2 Emery Doughty

3 [see page 7]

4 Erik Weagle

BECOME A MEMBER

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR 2002 DUES IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE

**DUES ARE STRICTLY FOR THE OPERATION OF
THE CHEBEAGUE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

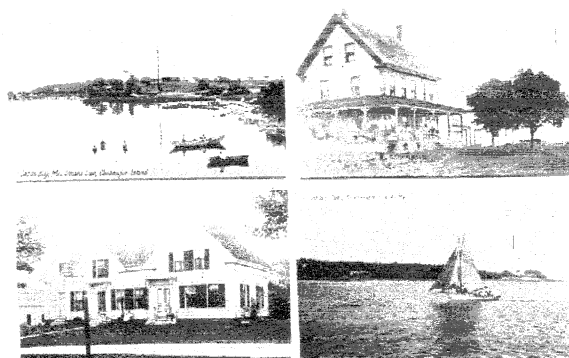
The Gift Shop Corner

Joan B. Robinson, Chair

THE THROWS that were ordered to hopefully be here by the Fourth of July ARE HERE! They are in hunter green / cream. There are a couple of blue ones left but no cranberry. Since you have to order 50 at one time it seemed prudent to try a new color. They really are neat! The price is still \$50.00.

The lobster buoy place mats are still available at \$6.00 a piece. We will hopefully have new magnets come summer too, along with school house magnets and pins. There is still plenty of note paper left along with back issues of the Annual Newsletter ['98, '99, '00, and '01] for the fantastic price of \$1.00 each. YOU CAN'T BEAT THAT!

All of these wonderful items can be found in my back entry. Call or come in anytime.



some of our many magnets

2002 Programs

April	Remember When with Martha Hamilton
May	Cemetery Tour with Donna Miller Damon
June	Annual Meeting - A play about the history of Island schools performed by Island students produced and directed by Donna Miller Damon
July	The Stone Wharf with Jim Millinger
August	The Great Bridge Controversy with Mac Passano
September	Remember The Maine , The Birth and Death Of America's First Battle Ship with Joel Eastman
October	Portland Trolleys with Frank Hodgdon, Scarborough High School.
November	no meeting
December	Annual Historical Society Christmas Party

Donations at free programs help defer expenses

.....AND NOW



This is the #3 house formerly on Flag Avenue .
It is now on the South Road and belongs to Gillian Ratcliffe

THE CHEBEAGUE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is a 501 (C) (3) non- profit organization
Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent
allowed by the law

**Gift naming opportunities for the
Museum of Chebeague History are still
available:**

- Educational Exhibition Center* \$100,000
- Storage Exhibition Center* \$ 50,000

Your support is appreciated!

Our dream of renovating the school house and annex is becoming reality thanks to your generosity during the All Island Campaign. For those who have yet to participate or choose to donate more we have gift opportunities to complete construction of and enhance

The Museum of Chebeague History:

interior painting	\$17,500
viewing window in entrance hallway (to view large items in storage)	\$ 3,850
exterior display window (vitrine) by entrance	\$ 1,050
half round window (front of school house – exterior)	\$ 800
storage shelving for annex	\$ 2,500
furnishings	\$ 5,000
computer	\$ 2,000
exhibit panels and stands	\$ 3,000

Chebeague Island Historical Society Board 2001 - 2002

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Mac Passano, Production

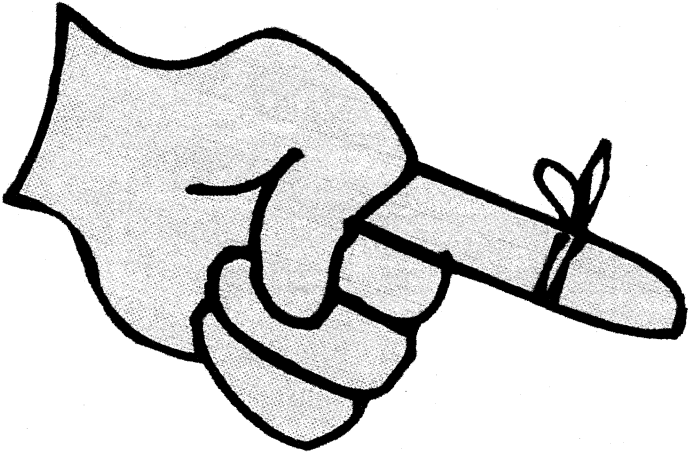
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A REMINDER TO PAY YOUR 2002 DUES

Due to printing costs, future editions of THE SLOOP'S LOG will be sent to dues paying members only