

Tours – Year End Report: 2010 - 2011

Janet Carter, (401-885-9723 or jzcart@cox.net) and Susan Crisafulli, (401-385-9887 or sgcris43@yahoo.com) were the **Activity Chairs for Tours** during the EGCNN Club Year, **2010 – 2011**. We scheduled tours for either a Tuesday or Thursday during the third week of the month to avoid conflicts with other club activities. We tried to make tours **affordable** and usually met in the parking lot of Showcase Cinemas at the corner of Division and Route 2 to car pool.

We started the year with an all-day trip to **Block Island** in September. Six of us boarded the high speed ferry for the 30 minute ride out to the Block. Upon arrival, we were met by Mig's Taxi and enjoyed a 90 minute van ride around the island, stopping for photos and history lessons along the way. We enjoyed lunch at the famous National Hotel then had time to do some shopping before catching the ferry back to the mainland.



Contacts:

- **The National Hotel:** 401-466-2901
- **Mig's Rig Taxi and Tours:** 401-480-0493 or www.migsrigtaxi.com \$10.00
- **Block Island Ferry:** (401) 783-4613 or www.blockislandferry.com \$35.85 Round Trip

In October we drove over to Little Compton, RI for a tour and wine tasting at the **Sakonnet Vineyard**. Only three of us were able to attend this tour but we enjoyed the video, personal tour and sampling of some interesting and delicious wines. It was a cool fall day with brilliant colors in the leaves. We stopped at The **Lobster Pot** in Bristol, RI for a leisurely lunch before returning to East Greenwich.

Contacts:

- **Sakonnet Vineyard** 162 West Main Road, Little Compton, RI 401-635-8486
- **Tour and wine tasting:** \$10.00 including the glass
- **The Lobster Pot:** 119 Hope Street, Bristol, RI 401-253-9100

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There was no tour in November. During December we went to **Linden Place** in Bristol, RI to see this historical sea captain's mansion decorated for the holidays. Only four members were able to make this excursion but all were happy to see the home and learn about its history.



Linden Place 500 Hope Street, Bristol, RI 401-253-0390

No tour was scheduled in January. We had one of the snowiest months in Rhode Island history. In February we stayed close to home, touring the historical **East Greenwich Town Hall**. Eight of us enjoyed listening to our tour guide, Bruce McGunnigle, who was a wealth of information including the building and East Greenwich history. This educational tour included the old jail cells in the basement and a climb up the clock tower where we each took a turn ringing the bell. Best of all, this tour was **free!**



East Greenwich Town Hall 401-885-8665

In March only three of us made the trip into Providence to visit the **RISD Museum of Art**. What a spectacular collection we found. Some exhibits change every few months while others are permanent. We spent over four hours wandering through the various exhibits and could not see everything. This could be a destination every year due to the changing sights. The museum will validate parking (nice discount but not free) for a lot located down the hill a couple of blocks away. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes.

Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: 224 Benefit Street, Providence, RI 401-454-6500 \$10.00 for adults \$7.00 seniors

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In April we went back to Bristol to celebrate **Daffodil Days at Blithewold**. We were able to stroll through the lovely mansion, still furnished with the original belongings of the family. Some of the wall paper has been replaced with reproductions of the original and some of the furnishings have been repaired but it is authentic. The gardens and greenhouse were bursting with color and a cold breeze blew in off Narragansett Bay.



Blithewold Mansion, Gardens and Arboretum 101 Ferry Road, Bristol, RI 401-253-2707 \$10.00 for adults, \$ 7.00 for seniors (62 +)

In May we kicked off **Memorial Day** weekend with a tour and brown bag picnic lunch at the **Smith-Appleby House** in Smithfield, RI. The home started as a 'stone ender' two room cabin built in 1696 by Elijah Smith. Over the years it was expanded several times and now includes a kitchen, bathrooms, and three or four bedrooms on the second floor. Today it is a museum run by the Historical Society of Smithfield. Maggie, our guide, shared a brief history of the house and surrounding property. This was an informal tour/history lesson. We were allowed to touch articles in the home, sit on the furniture, had tea and cookies for desert at the dining room table and played games on the lawn! The seven of us who attended were very happy with the day.



Smith-Appleby House 220 Stillwater Road, Smithfield, RI 401-231-7363 \$ 4.00

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We decided to have one final tour after school was out in June. We invited children ages 5 and above to join us as we travel to Portsmouth, RI to see the **Green Animals Topiary Garden**. This is the oldest such garden in the Eastern United States. Most of the designs (animals, birds, and geometric shapes) were created between 1905 and 1945.



Green Animals Topiary Garden 380 Corys Lane Portsmouth, RI

401-847-1000

Recommendations for future tours:

Rhode Island is blessed with so many historical sites. Unfortunately, many destinations are open only during spring and summer months. Try to take advantage of the outdoor venues in the fall and spring and plan indoor tours close to home for the winter months when weather could be a problem. Also try to visit different parts of the state. We tried to accommodate the younger members' schedules and depart after the school busses picked up children in the mornings and return before the afternoon bus runs. This did not seem to be an issue. Most of the participants this year were parents of older children or empty nesters. In previous years we picked a lunch spot near the tour site. This is additional work and adds cost to the day but seemed to be expected. We did not do that this year because we did not want to compete with the out to lunch activity. If you want to make it an all-day event, go ahead. There are some wonderful places in the neighboring states of Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Suggestions:

- ❖ **Mashantucket Pequot Indian Museum** 110 Pequot Trail, Mashantucket, CT 06338
- ❖ **Salem Witch Museum** 19 North Washington Square, Salem, MA
- ❖ **Plimoth Plantation** 137 Warren Avenue, Plymouth, MA
- ❖ **Newport Vineyards** 909 E. Main Road, Middletown, RI
- ❖ **Samuel Adams Brew House** 30 Germania Street, Boston, MA

Respectively submitted:

Janet Carter, Susan Crisafulli

June, 2011