



REUBEN BROWN HOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Reflecting Proudly...

2017

- **Membership** –Our committed, resourceful and fun members are what keep RBHPS vibrant. In 2017, we warmly welcomed 14 new and returning members: Vinson and Charlotte Bowers, Ken and Lisa Clark, Dalton and Sheila Dockery, Marcus and Jessica Gallagher, Rick and Mary Janet Maxwell, Justin and Rachel Smith, Jean Williamson and Amanda Worley for a total of 85 members. As Membership Liaison, Janice Simms contacted new members with RBHPS information and a word of welcome.
- **Annual Meeting** - Forty-four members enjoyed the hospitality of John and Sandy Turner at the Annual Meeting at their home on January 26. Thanks to all the members who provided appetizers and a delicious dinner before conducting our business and electing the following officers: Pres., Janice Young; V. Pres., Jeanette FormyDuval; Secretary, Hilda Ray and Treasurer, Tom Leggett.
- **A.R. Ammons Poetry Contest** – Over 700 student entries gave this committee plenty to work on for the 24th anniversary of this landmark event at Vineland Station on April 7. Many thanks to members Susan Wood, Melba Wyche, Pat Ray and Hilda Ray who have helped sustain this prestigious event over the years, to other members who assist with refreshments, announcing and serving and to our ongoing sponsors: BB&T and *The News Reporter*.
- **Fundraisers** – The Inaugural Brown House Lunch served on the grounds brought new faces to the House and lots of compliments to RBHPS. Profit from the sale of 270+ tickets and other items was \$2,700. Members did a phenomenal job of selling tickets, preparing food for 300, decorating, serving, manicuring the grounds, etc. A successful first-time undertaking under the leadership of Co-chairs Karen Dawsey and Jeanette FormyDuval. Another \$230 was brought in through the Belk Charity Day fundraiser. Thanks to all who supported that project.
- **Grounds/Building** – James and Ann Fowler insured that our grounds always appeared first-rate especially for special functions. During the year, the Whiteville Garden Club agreed to maintain a landscaped area on the property to honor Julia Bowers who was instrumental in the House relocation/restoration. Charlie Mullins kept a keen eye on buildings too. Sincere thanks to all.
- **Historic Property Survey** – We assisted Beth King from the N.C. State Historic Preservation Office and the City of Whiteville by arranging visits with owners of local historic properties in a quest to establish recognized Historic Districts within the City. The survey should be complete in 2018.
- **Historic Plaques** – Unveilings of 3 Columbus County Historic Landmark Plaques were held at St. Mark's AME Zion Church on Sept. 24 and on Oct. 26th at the Millpond Camp and the Byrne-Maxwell House (owned by Larry Beltz). An additional plaque for the Culbreth House (owned by Wade Greene) was purchased and the unveiling will be announced. We appreciate the support of these property owners and the hard work of Chair Donna Scott, researcher Karen Dawsey and committee members as we encourage historic preservation across Columbus County.

- **Literary** – In an effort to bring additional recognition to the upcoming 25th Anniversary of the A.R. Ammons Poetry Contest, RBHPS invited U.S. Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith to visit Whiteville in March of 2018. She graciously accepted. Events surrounding the visit will include a public performance and reception at SCC, an interactive session with over 500 7th grade students from across the county and a private reception for RBHPS members, event sponsors and special guests. This historic visit is being generously supported by numerous groups from across the County through financial contributions and in-kind donations. Special thanks to Pat Ray and Janice Simms who have spearheaded this landmark experience. On October 1, the Literary Committee also sponsored an informative program, “Through the Years,” at *The News Reporter* presented by Editor Les High who gave highlights of the Pulitzer Prize winner’s history.
- **Pecan Festival Home Tour** – As part of the Pecan Festival Home Tour on Nov. 3, Jean Williamson led over 65 guests to hear traditional music from the talented John Goodman, to see her exquisite quilting and to watch as skilled artisans demonstrated their crafts. The House and grounds were handsomely decorated with unique seasonal arrangements by Social Committee members.
- **Scrapbook**-A scrapbook chronicling our event-filled year was meticulously kept by Ann Fowler.
- **Socials/Refreshments** -Members enjoyed fun socials at the House on Aug. 22, Oct. 26 and Dec. 15. Many thanks to Social Co-Chairs Sandy Turner, Genie Carter and Margie Rabon and Refreshment Chair Karen Dawsey for providing charming, distinctive settings and delectable cuisine.
- **Publicity** – Jeanette FormyDuval helped share our story and events digitally on Facebook.
- **Bridge at the House** – Ann Pait led an innovative effort to bring guests to the House for bridge during the fall. The timing was not good and had to be discontinued. Ann thanks for thinking outside of the box.
- **Website** – Reubenbrownhouse.com covers general RBHPS information along with upcoming and past events for everyone to see through the giftedness of our own Steven Bryan. A new option to make donations and/or join RBHPS via PayPal was added in 2017.
- **Special Project - Detached Kitchen** – Steven Bryan generously offered RBHPS an historic outbuilding and other building materials from his family farm in Evergreen to be moved to the RBHPS property and used as desired – potentially for a detached kitchen. The group enthusiastically accepted his offer with plans for the purpose, restoration and move to be determined. This will be an important and exciting addition to add further authenticity to our property.
- **Officers** – Genuine thanks to Secretary Hilda Ray and Treasurer Tom Leggett for promptly and accurately keeping our minutes and financial records. Such cooperation and dependability are rare. Unfortunately, our V.P. Jeanette FormyDuval had to step down because of some unexpected circumstances, but many thanks to her for her leadership early on.

2017 will remain another outstanding year for the Reuben Brown House Preservation Society. I’m reminded of an anonymous quote that seems to reflect our organization:

“As we gather there in groups year after year,
A House becomes a reservoir of memory.
It becomes the place to which we long to return.”

Thank you for giving me the honor once again to have served as your President. I cherish your friendship and our accomplishments.

Janice Young