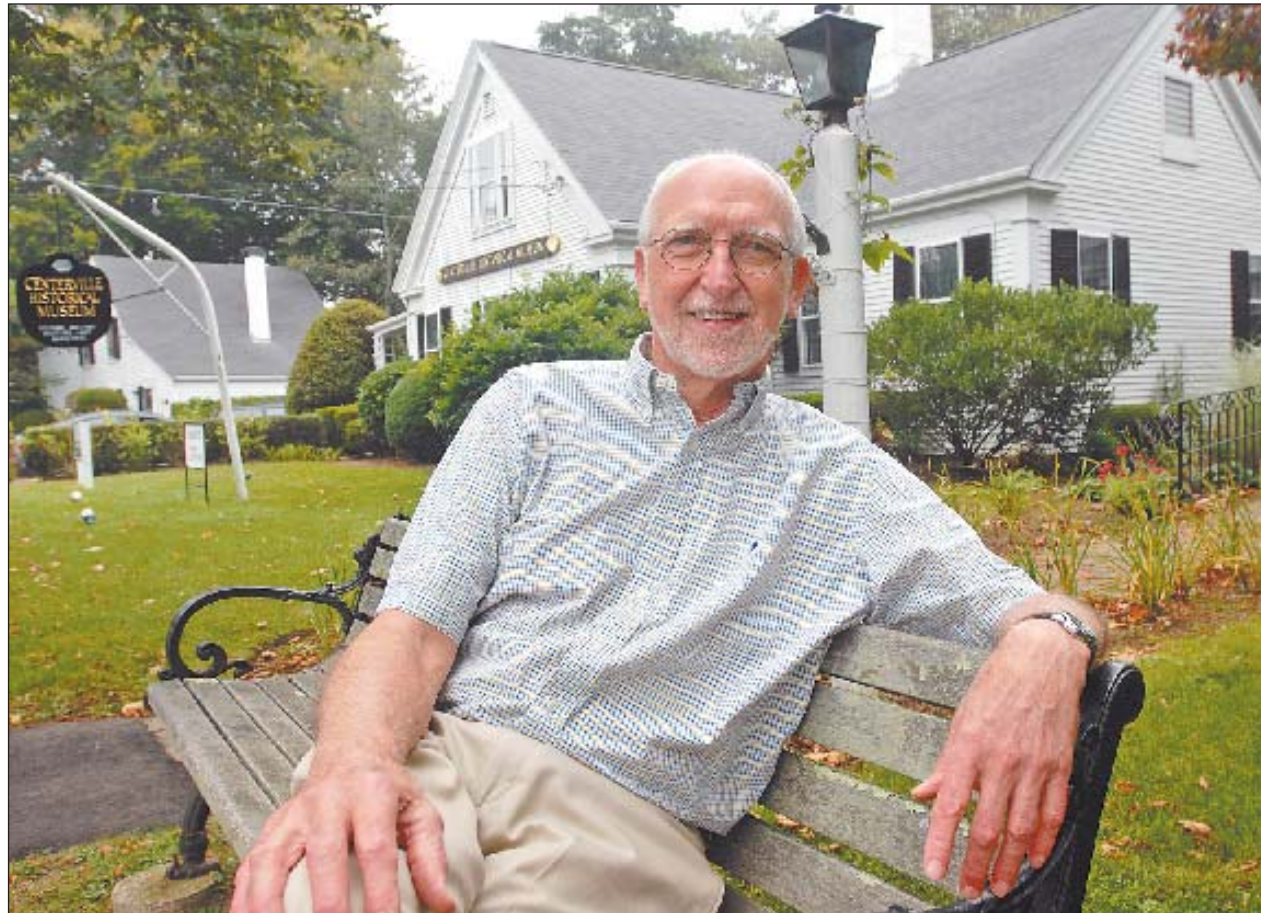


MERRILY
LUNSFORD/
CAPE COD TIMES
**Retired archi-
tect Ralph
Tolbert vol-
unteers his
time at the
Centerville
Historical
Museum and
works tire-
lessly to pro-
mote interest
in local his-
tory. He also
gives group
walking
lectures on
Centerville's
Main Street.**



RALPH TOLBERT

Pondering and preserving the past in Centerville

About the author

Barbara Ravage moved to Cape Cod from her native New York City in 2000, after the youngest of her children went off to college. She considers heavy doses of ocean air and Cape light the best cure for empty nest syndrome. A graduate of Barnard College, she is the author of nine books, including a biography of Rachel Carson for middle-school students and "Burn Unit: Saving Lives After the Flames," which explores the history and science of burn treatment. She balances her writing life with yoga, karate, and pottery. After years of making do with two summer weeks on the Cape, her favorite part about living here is that she's already home.

BY BARBARA RAVAGE

When Ralph Tolbert moved to Cape Cod in 2000, he intended to spend his retirement years gardening and playing golf. Instead, he found himself actively engaged in his new community.

With a background as an architect specializing in historic preservation, Tolbert is president of the Centerville Historical Society Museum. He has held the post since the fall of 2006, after serving on its board of directors for five years.

The museum occupies a 14-room building on Centerville's historic Main Street. It began as the 1854 home of Clark Lincoln, the village tinsmith, who passed it on to his only daughter, Mary. Upon her death in 1955, the Lincoln house was donated to the historical society, which built the mu-

seum around it. Over the years, more rooms have been added to accommodate the expanding collections. The museum's nine permanent exhibits range from a Colonial revival kitchen to mid-19th-Century period rooms; from historic children's toys and vintage dolls to military artifacts, uniforms, and weaponry; from poster art to quilts; and more than 60 wedding gowns dating from the 18th Century.

Many of its holdings are from the extensive, and eclectic, collection of Charles Lincoln Ayling, a prominent Centerville businessman and philanthropist, who was one of the founders of Cape Cod Hospital. In addition, special exhibits are on display from May 1 to December 15, when the museum closes for the winter. Lectures, workshops, and educational programs for all ages round out the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

offerings.

According to its mission statement, the museum aims "to preserve and share the history of Centerville and its people, inspiring a sense of community and appreciation of our Cape Cod heritage."

Tolbert believes the museum's location is ideally suited to its mission. "We can connect the houses you see along Centerville's Main Street to the activity that made Centerville possible," he told me.

It was sheer serendipity that brought Centerville and Ralph Tolbert together. He explained that he and his wife, Iris, "were initially looking on 6A from Sandwich to Brewster, but we couldn't find a place that suited our needs. So we cast a wider net." They happened upon the perfect house in Centerville.

"It's a little ironic because my wife's sister lived in Centerville for 15 years, and even though I'd visited there, I continued to think of it as a strip mall on route 28."

What he found instead is a village filled with history and a community

Quickhits

Centerville Historical Museum

513 Main St.
Centerville, MA 02632
508-775-0331
Open: Noon-4 p.m., Tues.-Sat., May 1-Dec. 15
www.centervillehistoricalmuseum.org
Admission: adults, \$5; seniors, students, \$4; children under 12, members, free.

November

Nov. 2-Dec. 15: Exhibit – Members' Menagerie
Nov. 9-Dec. 15: Exhibit – Museum's Holiday House
1 p.m. Nov. 14 : Meeting – 55th Annual

December

2-4 p.m. Dec. 1: A Holiday Children's Tea
4-7 p.m. Dec. 9: Centerville Christmas Stroll

PLEASE SEE **TOLBERT**, PAGE 32

Trust your heart to the Heart Center

*Serving Cardiac Patients
On Cape Cod Since 1975*

**Prompt evaluation of patients with chest pain
or other acute or chronic symptoms.**

**Philip N. Chiotellis, M.D., F.A.C.C.
Adnan I. Naber, M.D., F.A.C.P.**

**We would like to be
Your Cardiologist!**

508.771.4205

52 Park Street
Hyannis, MA 02601

WHAT MAKES RHCI

different?

Excellent results. Just ask Tony Fucci, who had extensive surgery after breaking his thigh bone while playing softball. RHCI's expert physical therapists helped him return to the game he loves.

"They did a heck of a job. I have no problems at all."

Outpatient services for sports and other injuries
in Sandwich, Bourne, Yarmouth and Orleans.

(508) 833-4000 + www.rhci.org

RHCI is affiliated with Massachusetts General,
Brigham and Women's, and Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospitals



**Rehabilitation Hospital
of the Cape and Islands**

Expert Care, Exceptional Caring • Sandwich, MA

A hospital dedicated to rehabilitation after injury, illness or surgery



Hospice at Home

"We had no local family to share the burden of my mother's care. It was overwhelming. The VNA of Cape Cod hospice staff became our family, my support group, our spiritual advisors. They brought peace to my mom and me.

If it weren't for the members of the VNA of Cape Cod, I probably couldn't have hung on as long as I did - and I know it was so important for my mother to be home with me."

Carol Knapp, daughter and caretaker for her terminally ill mother

the VNA is...



VISITING NURSES
ASSOCIATION OF CAPE COD
Cape Cod Healthcare

www.vnacapecod.org
For more information call 800-831-3900.

Tolbert

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

dedicated to preserving it.

"One of the joys of living in Centerville is to know and appreciate Main Street," Tolbert said. "The center of the village today looks much as it did in the mid-19th Century, and more than other villages on Cape Cod, it retains its essential character after almost 150 years."

It might have been otherwise, he observed, if Centerville had offered a better port than neighboring Hyannis. "We're very fortunate that the railroad did not come to Centerville. We were spared all the changes that occurred in Hyannis."

Ralph Tolbert, now 72, knows more about historic preservation than your average citizen. More than half of his 40-year career was devoted to bringing historic structures up to 20th-Century standards while retaining their original features. "We have to be very careful when doing preservation work. If we've done it well, people will wonder what it is we did. Preservation work is like that," he said, his

thoughtful and deliberate manner of speech carrying no hint of his native Georgia.

After earning degrees in architecture from Georgia Tech and MIT, he joined the firm of Goody Clancy in Boston. Over time, his work increasingly involved restoration and preservation of historic buildings. "Preservation work suited me," he said with a smile. "I enjoyed researching old buildings, figuring out what their problems were, and what was inherently not to be messed with."

The project perhaps most familiar to Boston residents and visitors is the restoration of Faneuil Hall and the Old State House, two stops on the Freedom Trail and hallmarks of the Boston National Historical Park. Tolbert served as chief architect, leading a team through three years of planning and two years of construction. He told me it was an enormous challenge, a word he uses often and always in its most positive sense.

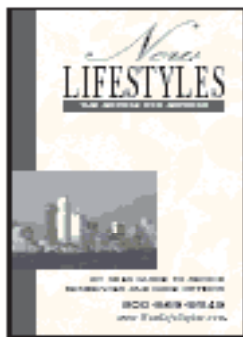
His retirement came just as the restoration of Trinity Church, the 1877 Romanesque structure in Boston's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

Looking for Retirement Options or Senior Care Providers?

Order New LifeStyles today!

THE SOURCE FOR SENIORS



It's a FREE guide that includes:

- All options, from Active Adult Communities to Alzheimer's care, including home care and valuable products and services
- Comprehensive listings of all licensed providers
- Articles and advice to help you make a decision
- Easy to use, with descriptions and locations of facilities

New LifeStyles is available for your area, as well as over 40 areas throughout the country.

Call Today! It's FREE!

1-800-820-3013

OR visit us online at:

www.NewLifeStyles.com



Callers requesting New LifeStyles may also receive information from providers in their area.

Going South for the Winter?

Make sure that your Cape Cod home is protected by installing a fully automatic stand by generator from Guardian



GUARDIAN
Elite SERVICE DEALER
Residential & Commercial
Sales, Service and Installation

CCIP
Cape Cod Independent

toll free - 888-887-7448
Serving all of Cape Cod
ccipgenerators.com

- Safe
- Reliable
- Affordable
- Fast, Professional Service

Workers' Compensation & Disability Law

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Spine Injuries • Carpal Tunnel • Heart Attacks
Stress • Repetitive Motion Injuries

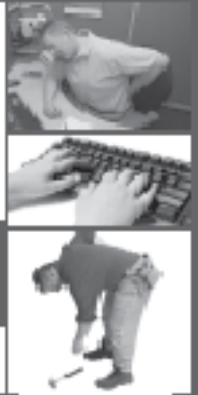
SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY & SSI
Are you being denied benefits?

(800)584.1116 for a FREE Consultation



The Law Office of
JULIANE SOPRANO
Attorney at Law • Workers' Compensation Law

FALMOUTH • DENNIS
www.yourdisabilitylawyer.com



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

Copley Square, was about to begin. "It was quite a wonderful project, hard to say no to. But I felt it was time," he said with more than a trace of regret, admitting that he had been reluctant to retire.

But Ralph Tolbert in retirement looks an awful lot like a man in active pursuit of new challenges. As he put it, "When I go into doctors' waiting rooms or on a plane and I look around, I'm always amazed that a substantial number of people are just sitting there. Not reading, not knitting. Just sitting. I've never understood how they could do that, and I certainly couldn't. So I think I have to keep busy."

One of the challenges he took on before heading the museum was the effort to expand the stock of affordable housing on the Cape. He chaired the design and construction committee of the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. "We can't even begin to fill the need for affordable housing here," he acknowledged, "but this year the Cape-wide affiliate of Habitat for Humanity will have completed its fiftieth house since it started on the Cape in 1988."

He also leads Elderhostel groups on tours of Centerville's Main Street. That's only one of several Main Street tours he conducts, another being the culmination of Centerville Old Home Week held each August. For him, it all comes back to the museum and the place it holds in the community. "There's a real and tangible relationship between what's in here and what's out there," he asserted.

Tolbert has had a lifelong love affair with history museums. For part of his childhood, the family lived in Columbus, Ohio, while his father was studying for a PhD at Ohio State. "I remember as a kid going through the [Ohio State] University museum and thinking all the things on display there were so special." Referring to the Centerville Museum, he added, "I think this is a special place. It has a lot of the character and charm that I remember as a child."

When he and Iris were raising their own children in Newton, Mass., they often took them to the Peabody Essex Museum, in Salem. "It has the same quality - a little dusty and a little off the beaten path. It's very different from the Children's Museum and the

PLEASE SEE **TOLBERT**, PAGE 35

Make it a wonderful life!

We are living longer than ever before. But our extra years are bringing rising living costs that put stress on retirement finances



There is a solution!

Yankee Mortgage is dedicated to helping senior citizens secure their wonderful lives.

Contact us now to find out how we can help.



YANKEE MORTGAGE CO., LLC

Serving the Senior Community Since 1947

Hyron Angel 508-362-8557 or 508-369-9590

hyron@yankeemortgage.com • yankeemortgage.com

Hallett Funeral Home

**Fran & Faith Hallett
Sisters & Owners**

273 Station Avenue, South Yarmouth | 508-398-2285
www.HallettFuneralHome.com

Cape Cod Lifeline

Living life on your own terms in the home you love.

When help is needed a simple press of your button summons help quickly.

Special Rates for Cape Cod Customers

Your Choice Pendant or Wrist

1 (800) 242-1306 ext 4710
visitingcaregivers.com

Bloom

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

new garden. "As we worked we gave Sue some gardening tips," Clarke recalls, "and she kept us supplied with iced tea and zucchini bread."

At the end of the day, Sue Gierej had a garden that reminded her not of cancer and feeling sick, but of beauty and generosity. "I visualize colors and flowers when I meditate," Sue says. "I can bring to my mind that peacefulness and quietness of the scene, and for me that is part of my healing. I use my garden to help me heal."

Sue wasn't the only one who was pleased about the Hope in Bloom experience. Will Clarke reports that it was meaningful for him as well. "I knew this was a good thing to do but I wasn't prepared for how rewarding the experience was," Will says. "Sue was so pleased! Partly I think it's just her nature, but also, even though it's what we do every day, to her, it was amazing how much we got done. I think, too, that it meant a lot to her

that strangers – not just us but the whole Hope in Bloom organization – had reached out to her. All three of us were a little choked up when we said goodbye."

After the garden was finished, Sue is still moved by the entire experience. "I have had the garden for two weeks and I haven't stopped smiling since!" she says. "Will and Sabrina are so wonderful ... to give up their valuable time to put in my garden was just as meaningful to me as Roberta's initial idea."

That's the whole idea behind the Hope in Bloom organization. "My goal is to put a smile on the faces of other breast cancer patients going through a very difficult time," Roberta Hershon says.

The entire experience brought home to all of the participants the magic of both gardens and of giving selflessly. "I love what I do," Will Clarke concludes, "but I don't always think of it as 'important' work. That day it felt very important and it brought the value of gardens back into focus for me."

Tolbert

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

Museum of Science, which have a lot of hustle and bustle, and buttons to push. Older museums are really contemplative places where you can ponder the past."

Touring the Centerville museum with Ralph Tolbert – from the attic to the basement – is a real treat. The street floor contains a number of exhibit rooms, large and small. The museum's collection of vintage clothing features a fabulous bead-encrusted gown made in Paris for Mrs. Charles Lincoln Ayling, which a volunteer spent nearly 300 hours restoring. The Sandwich glass collection and Elmer Crowell carved birds are displayed in vitrines, as is a pair of Chinese foot-binding shoes, tiny and ornate and rather horrifying.

Upstairs is a reproduction of a 19th-Century schoolroom, which hosts the Third Grade Program, a collaborative effort between the museum and local third-grade educators. Each spring, children from elementary schools in Centerville, Cotuit, Hyannis, Marstons Mills, and Osterville get hands-on history lessons by studying artifacts from

the museum's collection as well as the architecture and monuments near the museum.

The basement holds the Maritime Room, with its musty smell of sailing ships and its walls lined with portraits of captains with the familiar names: Bearse, Crocker, Crosby, Marston. It's Tolbert's favorite part of the museum. Why? "Because it reflects the reason Centerville is here," he replied.

On his wish list is a building-wide air-conditioning system, to protect the collections from the Cape's wildly variable humidity, and a complete inventory of the museum's holdings, accessible on a computer database. Ongoing fund-raising and the efforts of museum volunteers may someday fulfill those wishes. But as is true for all small-town historical societies, there will always be a need for more funds and more volunteers.

In the meantime, Ralph Tolbert continues to shepherd this gem of a museum. He may have come to the Cape to garden and play golf, but, he said with a wry smile, "My wife complains that I'm really not retired anymore."



so much more

'If only we'd known everything Hospice & Palliative Care of Cape Cod could do to improve the quality of our lives right now, we would have called them so much sooner.'

than last moments

All hospices are NOT the same – ask for us by name.

You may be surprised to learn about the many ways in which we can support your family's needs when dealing with a serious illness. Call us, the Cape's leading hospice specialists, to receive a free confidential consultation on how hospice can help you sooner than you may think.

The sooner you call, the more we can do. 508-957-0200, 24 hours a day, or go to www.HospiceCapeCod.org for in-depth information. A nurse is always available to speak with you.



Hospice
 & PALLIATIVE CARE
 of Cape Cod

Endorsed by the Cape Cod and Cotuit Chamber of Commerce

*Waldorf School
of Cape Cod*

*Holiday
Fair*

Saturday, November 17th
 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
*Admission Free to
Adults \$10.00*

45 Cotuit Road, Brewster
 508 757 2299



Food
Antiques
Tea Room
Museum Kitchen
Children's Toys
Children's Activities
Entertainment
Handicrafts
Music
and more!

Offering Early Childhood through Grade Eight