

Wall

by stephen hastings-king

I follow the historical society of a small town which enjoyed a brief period during which some things happened there. Those some things are what differentiate this small town from the other small towns with also have historical societies but in which no things have happened. All such historical societies are set up on the same two premises:

- (1) Things might happen.
- (2) We won't know.

Such is the duality of small towns: the hope; the smallness.

The above can be restated:

- (1) So, just in case
- (2) We still won't know.

Having established a historical society puts every small town in a similar situation, once the opening festivities have wound down:

Now what.

[...]
[...]
[...]

Well, we can't just wait around.

[...]
[...]
[...]

We might as well get on with it.

[...]

[...]

[...]

With what?

[...]

[...]

[...]

Moving things back and forth. Putting things next to or on top of other things and taking the resulting things apart, dragging them over there, and putting them back together again in order to stand back and look, I mean really look, probably with the aid of an upward thumb, and decide: No, that won't do. That won't do at all....

Which is what everyone does everywhere all the time but because everyone everywhere all the time does those things almost no-one anywhere knows about those things and it almost never occurs to anyone anywhere to speak on doing those things, even though the doing of those things is most of being a small town, most of the time, including when some things happen, because no-one knows they're happening and we have to do something.

And that is why I was pleased to see an announcement of an upcoming lecture to be delivered in the historical society of this town at some unspecified future date about stone walls and how to recognize them, to be given by a professional in the recognition of stone walls, who appears in the announcement, photographed while standing in front of, what I can only assume, is one.

I thought: So yes. Well then. There we are.
But there' s something wrong.

The officials of the historical society and I gazed upon that advertisement. They had a deadline, but we together had:

There's something wrong. But I can't put my finger on it.

I grew nervous and picked at a scab on my forearm.

Time went ticking ticking

Finally, they changed the scheduled date to "unspecified" and uploaded it.

I was able to exhale at last.

"We'll revisit this" they said to each other.

It was like I was in the room.

