

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

MAY-JUNE 2023

Mail: PO Box 84, Harwinton, CT 06791

email: harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Busy First Quarter of 2023 for HHS

By Bonnie Andrews

One-third of the calendar year 2023 has gone by and, so far, it has been a busy year for the directors of the Historical Society. In order to keep you informed, now seems like a good time to summarize matters being considered by the Board of Directors. Board meetings are held on the last Thursday of the month in the Jason Skinner House on Wintergreen Circle off Bentley Drive. Meetings begin at 3 p.m. and usually last about 90 minutes. Members are welcome, and encouraged, to attend.

Budget Process

In January, the Directors discussed the process used to create an annual budget. The Board will consider modifying the HHS by-laws to define a specific timeline for drafting reviewing, modifying (as needed) finalizing and approving the annual budget.

Drains Installed

The physical restoration of the First District 1840 schoolhouse has been completed with the use of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). HHS Director Mike Orefice coordinated the installation of drains along the north and west sides of the historic school building. The final project was completed with cooperation from Regional School District 10 (the schoolhouse is located on Region 10 property). The work, including re-seeding the grass, was done by Harwinton Paving.

See photo left.

New Sign

Now that work has been completed on the schoolhouse restoration, the directors are considering designs for a new sign in front of the schoolhouse.



Visit the Buildings

Outreach to the community, including field trips and other opportunities to visit the barn museum and schoolhouse, is being planned. These popular visits were discontinued during COVID and the restoration. It is hoped that school field trips will resume and more opportunities to visit the schoolhouse and barn museum can be made available. The Historical Society will join in Connecticut Open House Day June 10 from 1 to 3 p.m. The schoolhouse and barn will be open to the public that day. The Connecticut Office of Tourism has endorsed this event for the last 19 years.

See Busy First Quarter, page 4

Harwinton Historical Society

OFFICERS – 2023

President: Susan McClen
Vice President: Nancy Lyons
Secretary: Martha Warren Mitchell
Treasurer: Harry Schuh

DIRECTORS

Term Ends 2023
Michael Orefice
Everett Lyons

Term Ends 2024
Carol Kearns
Robert Lecko

Term Ends 2025
Bruce Burnett
Martha Lecko

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Bonnie Andrews

CURATOR

Bonnie Andrews

BUILDING SUPERVISOR

Dennis Andrews

AUDITOR

Marilyn Mitchell

Email:

harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Harwinton Historical Society
PO Box 84
Harwinton, CT 06791

860-482-7978

**Visit the HHS web site:
harwintonhistory.org**

**NOT A MEMBER OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY?
FOR A ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE FORWARD
\$15 PLUS YOUR NAME, FULL ADDRESS, PHONE &**

EMAIL TO

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Attn: TREASURER

PO BOX 84

HARWINTON, CT 06791



The Connecticut Department of Tourism is promoting this state-wide event for the 19th year. The Harwinton Historical Society will join in by opening its historic 1840 schoolhouse and nearby barn museum FREE to all visitors..

The buildings are located in front of the Consolidated School on Route 118. ,

Open House Day is intended to inspire Connecticut residents (as well as tourists) to become more aware of the amazing experiences right in their own backyard

SPYMISTRESSES

The Story of Allied Women Spies of WW II

Historian John Cilio

Sponsored by the Harwinton Historical Society

Sunday, May 21@ 4 p.m.

Harwinton Town Hall

Join us for this lively and engaging presentation about the history of women spies in World War II.

- Learn more about how these spies with flexible identities, elastic morals, and what has been referred to by some as situational ethics.
- Many women spies took dangerous risks, completed their missions and lived to tell the tale; others didn't.
- Some were professionally trained; others were simply masters of intrigue and deception.
- Women spies served the Allies uncovering secrets and made significant contributions to the war.

Presenter, John Cilio, has been on the historical storyteller speaker circuit for over a decade. He has seven published books ranging from historical aviation topics to women's accomplishments in the WWII workplace. His fifty-plus articles have been published nationally in newspapers and magazines and in private manufacturer magazines. His goal is to make historic events relevant and entertaining to the listener.

Busy First Quarter ... Continued from page 1

Glass Negative Project

Marti Lecko, Corinne Curtis and several other volunteers have spent many hours working on researching, cleaning, cataloging and storing the Historical Society's collection of glass negatives.

250th Anniversary

The Historical Society's participation in America's 250th anniversary celebration in 2026 (known as "America250") is ongoing. Eileen Schmidt and Alice Ridgway, representing the Litchfield Patriots Inc., spoke at the HHS 2022 annual meeting to answer questions and encourage participation in the America250 event.

Annual Appeal

The annual appeal, which seeks financial support from members and friends of the Society as well as Harwinton postal patrons, has been held since 2015. The most recent appeal began last September. As that appeal winds down, committee chairman Bob Lecko has called it a success.

Web Design

Processes for creating and maintaining a web site have been ongoing all year. The new site harwintonhistory.org was launched with guidance from. Board members Ev Lyons, Harry Schuh and Mike Orefice. HHS member Roland Perreault has offered to assist with maintenance of the site.

Programs

The HHS program committee (Marti Lecko, Bruce Burnett and Elaine Sederquist) has been busy finding ways to provide interesting and informative programs to offer members and the public. This year an educational on-line pilot program has been available weekly since February. Led by history professor Jared Day, the sessions feature "live" broadcasts on Thursdays at 1 p.m. via the easy-to-use ZOOM platform. These are followed by recordings of the history lessons that viewers can watch at their convenience. The benefits of the programs will be evaluated at the end of the sessions this summer. Meanwhile some "live" programs such as the upcoming "Spymistresses" will be offered in cooperation with the Harwinton Library on May 21.

Scholarship

Information on the availability of a \$1,000 scholarship was circulated to area schools that are attended by students who are Harwinton residents. Several applications are being considered by the scholarship committee and results will be announced soon. Bruce Burnett is chairman of the Scholarship Committee.

Building Maintenance

Building supervisor Dennis Andrews said he is hoping for warmer weather so he can complete cleaning and maintenance in the barn museum and schoolhouse.

Disaster Recovery Plan

In February, the board discussed the need to review and update a disaster recovery plan for the Society.

Cemeteries

The condition of the town's oldest cemeteries was discussed. A pdf file of the South Cemetery plot map has been secured in the event that the burial site map of South Cemetery ever needs to be replaced. The file contains the burial location map originally created by the late Town Historian and HHS member Roger Plaskett. The map is mounted on a kiosk that was made and donated by Brian Dunbar. The kiosk is located in South Cemetery. The pdf version of the map was downloaded to a flash drive by Print Master of Torrington.

Self-guided Tour

The self-guided tour of South Cemetery continues. If anyone notices that the program guides for the tour (available in at the cemetery entrance on South Road) needs replenishing, please leave a message at 860-482-7978 or send an email to harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Membership

Susan McClen, HHS president, is focusing on ways to increase membership and volunteer participation in Historical Society efforts. She has presented several suggestions to consider.

Doctor's Journals

Relatives of the late Dr. Charles Blake (one of Harwinton's "old time" family doctors) have donated a set of annual journals the doctor kept while practicing medicine in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Journals Donated

The Historical Society is the recipient of a \$5,000 donation from the estate of the late Louella Pratt Bartes. Louella was a long-time member of the Historical Society and its Board of Directors. A native of Harwinton, Luella was a resident of Canaan at the time of her death.

Connecticut Open House Day

This is the 19th year for the state to promote "Open House Day." Organizations are encouraged to participate by scheduling activities and opening museums etc. to the public at no charge. The intent is to raise awareness of and participation in what Connecticut offers its residents and tourists.

Outstanding Citizen

Historical Society Board member Bruce Burnett was selected by the town as its "outstanding citizen" of 2023. Bruce was honored at a dinner at Fairview Farms Country Club in April that was attended by about 150 guests including many relatives of Bruce, including some who traveled here from California and Colorado.

Membership Dues

Harwinton Historical Society dues (\$15 per person per year) are officially due by April 30 but may be sent to the Treasurer, Harwinton Historical Society at any time during the year.

How Can You Help??? Volunteer!

Be willing to volunteer at least 2 days a year to the Historical Society as one of the following:

- **Help with the Harwinton Fair**
- **Be a tour guide one weekend afternoon**
 - **Help clean the schoolhouse**
 - **Offer to help clean the barn museum**
- **Help set up or clean up at the Harwinton Fair (Country Store)**
 - **Work a shift at the fair (Country Store)**
- **Be a guide at the schoolhouse, barn museum or Skinner House**

.....

Cemetery Plot Map Preserved

The map below shows burial sites and coordinates for locating burials at South Cemetery. The original map was researched and designed by the late Roger Plaskett when he was Harwinton's Town Historian. The map is mounted on a wooden frame created by Brian Dunbar. Concerned that someday the map may need to be replaced due to age or weather damage, Historical Society members Dennis and Bonnie Andrews approached Print Master of Torrington for advice. Print Master had created the print version of the map, confirmed it was in possession of the pdf file and was willing to download it onto a flash **drive**. The Historical Society provided the flash drive and now has stored the file in a safe location where it will be available if the map needs to be replaced in the future.

-Bonnie Andrews

