



Preserving and Sharing History
HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Happy September!

We hope this newsletter finds you enjoying each day! We hope to see you soon!

All the best to you!

A STORY in STITCHES: 48 Years of Harwinton Woman's Club Quilts

Sunday, September 21 @ 2:00 pm

Harwinton Town Hall - 100 Bentley Drive



Each of the magnificent locally designed and handcrafted quilts has an important story to tell. Hear the Woman's Club quilters' stories! A Power Point will showcase each of the uniquely designed annual quilts. Three of the handmade quilts (Let Freedom Ring, Harwinton Town & Signature) are displayed in the Town Hall Assembly Room. The 2025 quilt will be on display at the program, and raffle tickets will be available.



The Harwinton Woman's Club has been making & raffling quilts every year since 1978 to fund the good work they do in our community. Join speaker Pat Green for a look back at 48 years of fundraiser quilts. See photos, and hear stories and memories from nearly a half century!

-Who organized the first quilt? -How are each year's themes chosen? -How long does it take to make each quilt? What is the process?

Co-hosted by Harwinton Library & Harwinton Historical Society



OPEN HOUSE **Before the "Quilt" program

1840 First District One-Room School & The Barn Museum

Sunday, September 21 *12:15- 1:45 p.m.

115 Litchfield Road, Harwinton- Grounds of Harwinton Consolidated School

*Experience how different schools were in the past.

*Explore a large collection of farm implements, carpentry tools, wagons, sleigh, household items, and other fascinating "items of the past" in *The Barn Museum*.

***Program and Open House events are free and open to the public.**

***TAKE-a-CHANCE**

***Take-a-Chance will be featured at the Harwinton Fair on October 3, 4, & 5!**

Tickets will also be available at the October 12 program! HHS promotes local businesses as we conduct this major fundraiser. Much appreciation to the many local business for donating gift certificates. (A list of gift certificate donors and sponsorships will be e-mailed and posted on the HHS website soon.) The drawing for gift certificates will take place at the October 12 program at 3:35 PM. Winner need not be present as gift certificates can be mailed.

Many thanks to those who have volunteered to assist at the Take-a-Chance table at the fair. Another volunteer would be helpful on Saturday, Oct. 4 from 12-3 and Sunday, Oct. 6 from 9-12. Please e-mail time block(s) that you would be available and we will e-mail confirmation of the schedule.

This is a major fundraiser for HHS that allows us to preserve and share history. Dollars raised support operations and offerings of HHS including: stewardship of the 1840 Schoolhouse and Barn Museum; Skinner House rent; and website, curator, and student lesson expenses.

And, be sure to take a chance on winning a wide variety of gift certificates! GOOD LUCK!

***UPCOMING PROGRAMS**



***Sunday, October 12, @2- Benedict Arnold - CT Born- Revolutionary War Hero- Traitor**

Presenter: Hamish Lutris- *In the winter of 1775-76, the colonial rebels attempted to add Canada to the areas breaking free of English rule. While one army marched on Montreal, Connecticut born Benedict Arnold led some 500 men on one of the most audacious marches in modern military history to attack the stronghold of Quebec. This talk discusses Arnold, the war in late 1775, and the campaign to take Canada. Though it ended in failure for Arnold, it cemented his reputation as one of the most skilled, tenacious, and aggressive American commanders of the war.*

***Sunday, November 16 @2- Cross-Country Adventures 1923: The Auto-Camping Craze**

Presenter: Andy Sistrand- *Auto-camping was a craze made possible by the availability of inexpensive autos such as the model T! Step back 102 years to learn about cross-country trips through the adventures of a drive taken by the neighboring town minister, Rev. Wallace Humiston, in his model T Ford. Learn about auto camping, early RVs, the hazards of early roads, a description of the route that Humiston took, some of the people he met along the way including Pueblo Indians; his being arrested in Mexico on suspicion of bank robbery, and an account of working on a government dam project in New Mexico. The presentation is illustrated with Humiston's photos and additional vintage photos of the places he visited. ****Please bring photos & stories of Harwinton's early transportation. and of Harwinton's church leaders' adventures.***

***Dawn to Dusk Daily: SELF-GUIDED CEMETERY TOUR-** South Cemetery - South Road

***CEMETERY RESTORATION WORKSHOPS**

HHS Plans to hold workshops to remove invasives, reset stones and decipher/record epitaphs at South Cemetery. This will continue work from Two Lights Day in the spring of 2025 and last year's efforts. Watch for fall and/or spring dates.

Many memorials have been cleaned in South Cemetery including all Revolutionary Patriots and their wives; ~80 stones that were toppled or leaning reset; the grounds were cleaned of dead branches and invasives; and branches were trimmed to protect gravestones. Much appreciation to the hardworking volunteers who have brought Harwinton's South Cemetery to portray more and more respect/honor to the early settlers of our town. Work was also completed at Center Cemetery and currently a map is being readied for sharing.

***NEW HOME EXPLORATORY**

To preserve one of the most significantly historic homes/estates in Harwinton is a dream opportunity for our community. It will allow the HHS to provide the community access to our extensive acquisitions that are currently inaccessible to the public. The 4.29-acre Catlin Inn property includes the beautiful 1760 house and barn.

HHS BOD is exploring options for the Catlin Inn and plans to bring thoughts to the membership in the fall.

***IN MEMORY of Member and Friend, JAMES A. CURTIS**

June 14, 1936 — August 19, 2025

Jim- true friend, understanding, generous, devoted community volunteer . . . We thank Jim for who he was as a person/friend. His contributions to our community were vast and impactful. Jim served as a hardworking director for the Harwinton Historical Society and devoted time and energy alongside his beloved wife Corinne. His support was unending. Jim had a keen interest in history. We all enjoyed chatting with Jim at programs as he reflected while enjoying a sweet treat!

Jim believed strongly in giving back to his community. Jim served not only as a director of the Harwinton Historical Society, but devoted time to his church, Harwinton Youth Sports Association, Harwinton Ambulance, and as director of Harwinton Agricultural Society.

He was the beloved husband of Corinne for 58 years. Born in New Brunswick, Canada, Jim spent his early years living on his grandfather's farm on the banks of the Miramichi River. At the farm he not only learned the skills of hunting and fishing, but also enjoyed numerous mischievous adventures. As a teenager Jim moved to Torrington with his family and began working at the local Palace and Warner theaters. After marriage to Corinne, Jim moved to Harwinton where they raised their two children.

Jim was a graduate of the class of '55 at Torrington High School, and later graduated from Waterbury State Technical College. He served as a member of the Air Force Reserve. After 43 years as an employee of the Torrington Company Jim retired in a supervisory role from the metallurgical lab, giving him more time to enjoy his annual trips to Canada; tinkering with his apple trees, garden, and yard; making maple syrup, as well as spending time with his beloved family. Jim adored his wife Corinne, two children, and four grandchildren. His sharing of his lifetime stories brought many smiles.

Thank you to those who have honored Jim through memorial contributions. We thank Jim for making the world a better place.

***LIFE IN HARWINTON: AMBROSE FENN DIARIES 1867 – 1892**

HHS member/ Town Historian Susan McClen is dedicated to preserving history. Recently Susan transcribed eighteen diaries, covering 1867 to 1892 that were kept by her great-grandfather, Ambrose Fenn. Ambrose was a selectman, state representative, served on town committees/boards, and was a church deacon. The diaries contain life in Harwinton such as what they grew on the farm, transportation, and overall life in Harwinton for that time period.

The diaries are a valuable resource as they allow us to “step back into earlier Harwinton days”. We thank Susan for donating a copy of the book to HHS. Copies of the 474-page book are available to the public. Please contact Susan at susanmcclen@yahoo.com for more information.

Many thanks to Susan for preserving and sharing history.

AMERICA 250

Celebrations are being planned for Harwinton’s celebration of the 250th birthday of our country in 2026! The Harwinton Selectmen voted to form a committee and requested HHS to take the lead. The HHS Program Committee is excited to be planning programs/events that are informative, engaging, and cover a range of topics! Designing themed merchandise is being planned to honor Harwinton/250 years of our country.

Towns across the country are planning to host a series of educational and social events for their residents, and we would love your help to do so in Harwinton. Some communities are bringing all together in celebration by asking nonprofits to participate in/host one or more celebration events over the next year, engaging students, incorporating America250 into townwide events (e.g. picnics, parades, concerts), and hosting presentations on era themed topics.

The community is invited to submit names to join the 5 who have agreed to serve on the Harwinton America250 committee. The role of the committee is to encourage collaboration and coordination of events. If you have thoughts of how you (group/neighborhood/yourself) would join in the 250th celebration, we would love to have you share. Together we can make Harwinton America250 commemoration special for our community; please e-mail (harwhistsoc@gmail.com). Thank you!

***HHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Your Board of Directors (President: Martha Lecko; Vice-President: Elaine Sederquist; Treasurer: Harry Schuh; Secretary: Nancy Lyons; Directors: Bruce Burnett, Kristine David, Carol Kearns, Robert Lecko, Kevin Smail; Curator: Ann Harrington; Building Superintendent: Dennis Andrews; Immediate Past President: Susan McClen) looks forward to leading your organization in its mission of preserving and sharing local history. We would love to have you share your thoughts. *Might you have thoughts for a project or fundraiser or for the 250th Commemoration? We would love to chat with more folks who would assist with exploring grant availability and grant writing.* And, if you are interested in being in a leadership role by serving on a committee (e.g. Annual Appeal, Programs) or on the BOD, please e-mail HHS.

We look forward to seeing you/hearing from you soon! Please let us know for which activities you are available/interested in volunteering! Everyone’s involvement will make for a strong and impactful organization. Your time and thoughts are much appreciated.