

# HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July 2014

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## **OFFICERS:**

President: Eleanor Woike  
Vice Pres.: Nancy Schnyer  
Secretary: Loda Sheehan  
Treasurer: Harry Schuh

## **DIRECTORS:**

Luella Bartes  
James Curtis  
Carol Kearns  
Candace Jones-Pacholski  
Elaine Sederquist  
Open

## **CURATORS:**

Beverly Mosher  
Bonnie Andrews

## **BUILDINGS:**

Dennis Andrews

## **Civil War Brought Positive Changes in Medicine**

On Monday evening, June 23, at the Senior Center, Harwinton resident and Civil War re-enactor Dane Deleppo presented an interesting slide presentation and talk on the changes in the medical field brought about by the Civil War. He noted some of the people who made significant contributions to the field of medicine during the period from 1840 to 1870.



**Dane Deleppo  
Re-enactor**

Dane pointed out the improve-  
*See Civil War on page 4 ...*

## **HARWINTON HOUSE PROJECT - UPDATE AND CURRENT STATUS**

**By Roger Plaskett**

**Chairman, Harwinton House Committee**

The Harwinton House project continues to be affected by insignificant funding. On April 15th the Harwinton House Building Committee presented the Board of Selectmen with an update on the project in the form of a Power-Point presentation. This presentation suggested that phasing the project might be the only possible way to get the project moving in the foreseeable future. They estimated that the project was currently about \$43,000 short of being able to erect the house as a "weather tight shell" on a minimally prepared site. The committee also explained the risks associated with such an approach including having a partially completed house standing as an "eyesore" on Town owned land. In reality, this approach simply pushes the lack of funding to complete the project down the road but would provide more visibility and awareness to the community. Nearly \$300,000 would still need to be raised for completion.

On May 16th the Building Committee sent a letter to the Board of Selectmen explaining that the Committee would soon be finished with the Architectural phase and requested a direction in which to move forward.

*... Harwinton House Update, Continued on page 2*

***HARWINTON HOUSE UPDATE, continued from page 1***

On May 29th, First Selectmen Michael Criss informed the committee that the Board of Selectmen had voted to suspend the Harwinton House Committee's activities after the Architectural phase is completed and until such funding is in place to complete the resurrection of the house in its entirety. The Committee estimates that the architectural phase will be complete by the beginning of August 2014.

The Board of Selectmen will be responsible for exploring all aspects of fund-raising including major corporate type donations and available grants.

**BACKGROUND:** The house known as “Harwinton House” was built in Harwinton in 1795 by Steven Graves, a Tory during the American Revolution. The Graves family lived there until 1827. There were a number of owners after that until 1931 when the Bristol Water Company purchased the land as part of its reservoir system. The house was taken apart and reassembled (with some renovations) in the town of New Canaan.

In 2010 the property in New Canaan was sold and the new owners started to build a new, modern home on the lot and planned to demolish “Harwinton House.” The New Canaan Preservation Alliance, being aware of the house’s history, contacted Harwinton officials and a plan was quickly established to save the structure. Glastonbury Construction was hired to dismantle the house and save all of its 18<sup>th</sup> century components. These were loaded into trailers and brought back to Harwinton where they remain in storage today until sufficient funds can be raised to rebuild the house on town-owned land.

The Harwinton Historical Society has donated about \$27,000 toward restoration of Harwinton House and continues to accept donations for this project.

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**Annual Field Trip**

**Consolidated School Second-Grade Students Visit the First District Schoolhouse**

On Monday, June 2, approximately 90 second grade students, their teachers and chaperones from the Harwinton Consolidated School visited the Historical Society’s First District restored one-room schoolhouse and the barn museum.

This annual field trip was sponsored by the school’s parents’ organization. Coordination between the historical society, teachers and parents was organized by Amanda Delmonte. Each class spent a half hour in the barn and a half hour in the schoolhouse where they received an overview of Harwinton’s history.

The weather was ideal for this end-of-the-year activity. A number of historical society members served as tour guides this year under the leadership of Corinne and Jim Curtis.

In addition to Jim and Corinne, special thanks go out to Brian Dunbar, Mary English, Carol Kearns, Bev Mosher, Roger Plaskett, Dave Ryan, Harry Schuh, Nancy Shanley Schnyer and Elaine Sederquist for contributing time to this special project.

## Connecticut History Day

Seven historical society members manned the Historical Society's 1840 schoolhouse and barn for two hours on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup> as part of Connecticut History Day. This annual statewide event offers an opportunity for free access to museums and places of historical interest across Connecticut. Those who helped that day were Corinne Curtis, Jim Curtis, Brian Dunbar, Shirley Gay, Beverly Mosher, Elaine Sederquist and Ellie Woike. Thank You!

## Super Saturday

Nancy Shanley Schnyer headed the effort to set up a display of materials representing both the Historical Society and the Harwinton House Committee at Super Saturday, May 17. Nancy is vice president of the historical society, a member of the Harwinton House Committee, and a member of the Board of Selectmen. Roger Plaskett and Elaine Sederquist assisted Nancy with setting up and maintaining the table at the town hall complex for this annual town-sponsored event.

## Upcoming Events:

**Thursday, July 17, 6:30 p.m. - Board of Directors Meeting, Skinner House**

**Thursday, July 28, 6:30 pm. - Quarterly Membership Meeting, Senior Center, Weingart Road**

## Harwinton Fair – October 4 and 5

The Harwinton Fair is just over 3 months away! We will need items to sell and people to sell them. The fair is a major effort for the Historical Society and, currently, is our main fund raiser. Please consider donating "like new" used books, curios, antiques, craft items, hand-sewn pieces, perennials suitable for planting in the fall or any other items appropriate for sale at a country store. Garden vegetables are also welcome. Closer to fair weekend people will be asked to donate baked goods.

Workers will be needed at the country store for 2-hour shifts and also at the shingle mill. A few people to make phone calls will also be sought. You may volunteer at any time. Contact Dennis or Bonnie Andrews. At 860-482-7978 or via email at harwhistsoc@gmail.com.

## TRIVIA

**In June we asked what other purpose the white wooden sign post on the center green at the intersection of Route 4 and South Road served in addition to providing directions and distances to such places as Burlington, Hartford, Litchfield, Torrington and Plymouth.**

*Answer: In the past, the sign post also served as a place to post information about town meetings and other important public gatherings. The overhang on the sign provided a bit of protection from the weather for the postings of important information.*

**+ Look for July trivia question on page 4 +**

***Civil War brought change in medicine, continued from page 1***

ments in hospital care, surgery techniques and sanitary conditions that resulted from the war. Soldiers were often treated on the battlefield in what would be considered crude and primitive conditions today. Throughout the war surgeons noted what seemed to work well for the patients and what did not and gradually improved their techniques and methods.

Dysentery and disease, often the result of unsanitary conditions killed more soldiers than bullets (for example, bandages and surgical instruments were reused without being cleaned), Dane said. Food and water were often in short supply and frequently contaminated. This led to the spread of disease and infections at a time when their causes were not generally understood. Without good techniques for sterilizing and no antibiotics, the soldier often died or amputation became the treatment of choice.

Prior to the war there were few hospitals and they were used for difficult birthing situations or for treating the poor. Most doctors made house calls and even conducted surgeries in the home. By the end of the war there were hundreds of new hospitals including one in New Haven that treated thousands of Civil War veterans. Triage, a new method for assigning a level of urgency to large numbers of casualties, improved the way wounded soldiers were treated. The use of anesthetics and ambulances were also significant improvements in medical care that were in place when the war ended.

Dane was assisted by his wife, Carol, who is also a re-enactor.

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**Attention Historical Society members: Interested in doing more?**

If you would be interested in serving on the board of directors of the historical society, please contact one of the current board members or officers. New ideas are encouraged – send them to the Historical Society's gmail account:

[harwhistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:harwhistsoc@gmail.com) or contact a member of the Board of Directors.

**Not a member?**

There are a lot of people receiving this newsletter who are not historical society members. If you are interested in becoming a member, dues are \$15 a year payable to Harwinton Historical Society, c/o Treasurer, PO Box 84, Harwinton, CT 06791. Dues help to offset expenses and further the mission of the organization.

**Personal Notes:** Bruce Mosher is a resident of Valerie Manor, 1360 Tarringford Street, Torrington and would appreciate a visit or card.

If you know of members or friends of the Historical Society who are homebound or reside at a facility, please brighten their day with a piece of mail, a phone call or brief visit.

**A Bit of Trivia for July: Over the years there have been many names attached to the main road from Farmington to Litchfield as it passes through Harwinton. Can you list five?**

**+ Answer in August newsletter +**