

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020

Mail: PO Box 84, Harwinton, CT 06791

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Historical Society Vice President Named Outstanding Citizen

Nancy Shanley Lyons has been selected to receive the 2020 Harwinton Outstanding Citizen Award. Nancy has a long list of accomplishments as a community volunteer, including her current role as vice president of the Harwinton Historical Society.



Nancy comes from a local family with a rich history of giving back to the community. Her father, Lloyd Shanley, served on the Board of Finance and was Harwinton's First Selectman for 22 years. He was also the town historian and the recipient of the same award now being given to his daughter. Nancy's mother, Helen, served as a state representative under Gov. Ella Grasso and was well-known as a local journalist and volunteer.

Nancy graduated from Lewis S. High School and went on to earn undergraduate and

graduate degrees in elementary and special education as well as her sixth-year certificate in special education administration. In 2014 she retired after working with children and adults with special needs for 45 years. Since then, Nancy has assisted several school systems in need of administrative coverage.

Her contributions include a long list of volunteer service in town government as well as many civic, political and altruistic organizations. Nancy's efforts have frequently resulted in special recognition for her achievements.

Nancy is married to Dr. V. Everett Lyons. They live on Hill Road.

The ceremony honoring Nancy as Harwinton's Outstanding Citizen will take place at Fairview Farm Golf Course on Friday evening, April 17th. Tickets are \$40 per person, \$10 for children under 10, and can be obtained by calling 860-485-0120.

PROGRAM WILL EXPLAIN THE YEAR WITHOUT A SUMMER

Residents of Harwinton, like most New Englanders, are accustomed to long, cold winters. But 1816, which became known as "The Year Without A Summer," was beyond what anyone had grown to expect then or now. The impact on agriculture and life in general made people question themselves and their hope for the future.

On **Sunday, March 8th at 2 p.m. at the Harwinton Congregational Church**, Town Historian Roger Plaskett will explain the cause and effect that the weather that year had on the local residents and the church.

This free program is sponsored by the Harwinton Historical Society in cooperation with the Harwinton Congregational Church.

OFFICERS – 2020-2021

President: Bonnie Andrews
Vice President: Nancy Lyons
Secretary: Elaine Sederquist
Treasurer: Harry Schuh

DIRECTORS

Term Ends 2020

Michael Orefice
Everett Lyons

Term Ends 2021

Carol Kearns
David Ryan

Term Ends 2022

Bruce Burnett
Martha Lecko

**IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT**

Vacancy

CURATOR

Bonnie Andrews
with assistance from
Mary English & Corinne Curtis

BUILDING SUPERVISOR

Dennis Andrews

OTHERS

(non-board positions)

HISTORIAN

Roger Plaskett

AUDITOR

Marilyn Mitchell

LEGAL COUNSEL

Patrick Wall

Email:

harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Harwinton Historical Society
PO Box 84
Harwinton, CT 06791

LIST OF UPCOMING PROGRAMS

2020



The Year Without a Summer – presented by
Harwinton Historian Roger Plaskett:
Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m.
Harwinton Congregational Church

***19th Amendment: A Tale of Suffrage, Sacrifice,
and Success*** - Mariann Millard (Mariann
presented the well-received “First Ladies” program
in 2019):

Sunday, April 5 at 2 p.m.
Harwinton Town Hall

The Crate: Reliving the Holocaust - Author
Debbie Levison.

Sunday, May 3, at 6:30 p.m.
Harwinton Public Library

New England's Other Witch Hunt with State
Historian Walter Woodward

Sunday, October 18 at 2 p.m.
Harwinton Town Hall

***First Ladies: High Tea & High Notions –
Champions of Social Causes*** with Mariann
Millard (First Ladies presenter)

Sunday, November 15 at 2 p.m.
Harwinton Town Hall

Please forward your program comments and
suggestions to harwhistsoc@gmail.com

**SATURDAY, JUNE 13th IS CONNECTICUT OPEN HOUSE
DAY. WE NEED 4 PEOPLE TO GREET VISITORS AT
THE SCHOOLHOUSE AND BARN FROM 1 TO 3 PM. IF
YOU CAN HELP, PLEASE CONTACT EITHER:
Bonnie Andrews 860-482-7978
Nancy Shanley Lyons 860-485-0035**



History of the Thomaston Dam Precedes the Flood of '55

“To fully understand the Thomaston Dam project and its influence on the Naugatuck Valley towns and hamlets, one must go back much further than the flood of 1955 that most of us relate to as the sole reason for its construction.” This is the opening paragraph of an article posted recently by Town Historian Roger Plaskett on the Harwinton history web site.

Plaskett has gathered facts about the dam and its past from newspaper articles that were published as they happened. He notes that “Any opinions offered in this context, are my personal ones and may or may not be supported by the people or organizations involved.”

The Thomaston Dam area includes 849 acres of federal land in Thomaston, Harwinton, Litchfield and Plymouth. The flood control dam that most people associate with the area, was completed in 1968. But the history of the area goes back much farther.

To read more about Plaskett’s findings, visit https://www.harwintonhistory.com/Thomaston_Dam.html

A BIT OF TRIVIA:

After reading Dave Ryan’s February newsletter article on preserving meat in the old days, former Harwinton resident Walter Wilcox (now a resident of Sheffield, Mass.) said he used a similar process to cure pork. He said bacon was especially good when smoked with green apple wood or whole dried ears of corn. “Old timers used to say to make brine, float a potato in salty water. Too much salt for today now that we have freezers, but it sure kept pork well,” Wilcox said.

What's New? Memories

The Historical Society is the recipient of two items from former Harwinton resident Beatrice Kasznay Garner.

“Bea” has written her memories of attending Clearview School from 1938 to 1946. She also donated her copy of a 1950 Torrington High School yearbook. The book includes a list of Harwinton students who are featured in the publication. In addition to Beatrice, she named the following: Ronald Barrante, Marjorie Chiron, Frances Drake, Louise Easton, Virginia Easton, Ed Kilner, Martin Kelley, Joyce Pustinger, Donald Renton, Balance Rice and Lydia Zolla.

Looking Back in Harwinton History

Twenty-five years ago

In March of 1995 the town of Harwinton took possession of the 3,000 square foot Jehovah’s Witness Kingdom Hall on Weingart Road for use as recreational center for senior citizens. The purchase was made possible by a \$400,000 Small Cities Block Grant. Purchase price for the property was \$200,000. The seniors had been meeting in the Harwinton Congregational Church.

A large crowd attended the 21st Annual Harwinton Lions Club Home Show that was organized by co-chairmen **Bruce Mosher** and **Peter Salwocki** and held at the Armory on South Main Street in Torrington.

Plans were being made for the first **Bronc Callahan Harwinton Hoedown** as a memorial to Callahan for his many volunteer contributions to the town.

Ten years ago

Lawrence “Larry” Connors was the 36th recipient of the Harwinton Outstanding Citizen Award in 2010.

A 2.5 miles stretch of Route 4 was named the “**Francis J. Oneglia Memorial Highway**” to honor the long-time Harwinton resident and former O&G executive.

Colin Fox, eucharistic minister at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, was recognized for his service to the church community by the Hartford Archbishop.

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2020 Historical Society dues are now past due. To maintain your membership and continue to receive board meeting minutes and special announcements, please forward your dues (\$15 per person) to:
Treasurer, Harwinton Historical Society, PO Box 84, Harwinton, CT 06791.