

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020

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ARE YOU A VEXILLOLOGIST?

Program Committee Update

In the ever-changing landscape that we find ourselves, our first priority is the safety and well-being of all. Following CDC and Governor Lamont's guidelines, we have cancelled the May 3 program, Reliving the Holocaust. . . THE CRATE: A STORY OF WAR, A MURDER, AND JUSTICE. We will try to reschedule the program.

Through the newsletter and emails, we will keep you informed of any changes that we need to make in the program schedule. In the meantime, please enjoy some fascinating history!

Ev'ry heart beats true, 'neath the Red, White and Blue... - George M. Cohan

The Flag of the United States of America

"Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress established an official flag for our new nation. *Old Glory* has survived battles, inspired songs, and evolved in response to the growth of the country it represents.

- *Old Glory* reigns as a nickname for our stars and stripes. The name *Old Glory* was given to a large, 10 x 17-foot flag by its owner, William Driver, a sea captain from Massachusetts. Driver's flag is said to have survived multiple attempts to deface it during the Civil War. Once the war ended, Driver was able to fly the flag over the Tennessee Statehouse. The flag is a primary artifact at the National Museum of American History.
- Between 1777 and 1960 Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design, and arrangement of the flag-allowing stars to be added to reflect the admission of each new state.
- The origin of the first American flag is debated by historians. Some historians believe it was designed by New Jersey Congressman Francis Hopkinson and sewn by Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross.
- Today the flag consists of 13 horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with six white. The stripes represent the original 13 Colonies and the stars represent the 50 states of the Union.
- The colors of the flag are symbolic: red symbolizes hardiness and valor, white symbolizes purity and innocence, and blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice.



The American Flag, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

OFFICERS – 2020-2021

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

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Term Ends 2021
Carol Kearns
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Vacancy

CURATOR

Bonnie Andrews
with assistance from
Mary English, Corinne Curtis and Susan
McClen

BUILDING SUPERVISOR

Dennis Andrews

OTHERS

(non-board positions)

HISTORIAN
Roger Plaskett

AUDITOR

Marilyn Mitchell

LEGAL COUNSEL

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Harwinton, CT 06791
860-482-7978

Stop & Shop

Community Bag Program



The Harwinton Historical Society will receive a \$1 donation for every \$2.50 Community Bag sold at the Stop & Shop store located at 931 Tarringford Street, Torrington CT in the month of **May**. This is the second year Stop & Shop has offered this program.

A BIT OF TRIVIA

- Andrew Jackson was the first President born in a log cabin.
- According to his executor's inventory, George Washington owned 884 books at the time of his death.
- Ronald Reagan was married to his first wife, Jane Wyman, for 8 years.
- Four state capitals are named after presidents. They are: Jackson, Mississippi; Jefferson City, Missouri; Lincoln, Nebraska and Madison, Wisconsin.
- The highest peak in Connecticut is Bear Mountain in Salisbury.
- Connecticut is the third smallest state by area.
- Connecticut averages 2,400 hours of sunshine per year.
- Yale College was established in 1701. That was 36 years before the town of Harwinton was incorporated.
- In 1842 Harwinton's selectmen voted to pay Reuben Bartholomew 25 cents to ring the church bell for each death. At that time, it was the custom to toll the bell once for each year of a deceased person's age.

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- The National Museum of American History displays the enormous 1814 garrison flag that survived the 25-hour shelling of Fort McHenry in Baltimore by British troops and inspired Francis Scott Key to compose *The Star-Spangled Banner*. On September 14, 1814 amateur poet Francis Scott Key was so inspired by the sight of the American flag still flying that he wrote *The Star-Spangled Banner* . . . on the back of an envelope. The music is from an old English drinking song, *To Anacreon in Heaven*. The flag is now stored at a 10-degree angle in a special low-oxygen, filtered light chamber and is periodically examined at a microscopic level to detect signs of decay or damage within its individual fibers.
- *The Star-Spangled Banner* officially became our national anthem in 1931.
- In 1892, the flag inspired Francis Bellamy to write what was to become known as *The Pledge of Allegiance*. It was first published in a magazine called *The Youth's Companion*. A revised version of Bellamy's writing was adopted as part of the national flag code by Congress in 1942, the 50th anniversary of the writing. In 1954 Congress added the words "under God."
- On Aug. 3, 1949, President Harry S. Truman officially declared June 14 as Flag Day.
- There are a few locations where the U.S. flag is flown 24 hours a day- either by presidential proclamation or law:
 - Fort McHenry, National Monument and Historic Shrine, Baltimore, Maryland
 - Flag House Square, Baltimore, Maryland
 - United States Marine Corps Memorial (Iwo Jima), Arlington, Virginia
 - On the Green of the Town of Lexington, Massachusetts
 - The White House, Washington, D.C.
 - United States customs ports of entry
 - Grounds of the National Memorial Arch in Valley Forge State Park, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania
- Old Glory flies on distant shores:
 - In 1909, Robert Peary placed an American flag, sewn by his wife, at the North Pole. He also left pieces of another flag along the way. It is the only time a person has been honored for cutting the flag.
 - In 1963, Barry Bishop placed the American flag on top of Mount Everest.
 - In July 1969, the American flag was "flown" in space when Neil Armstrong placed it on the moon. Flags were placed on the lunar surface on each of six manned landings during the Apollo program.
 - The first time the American flag was flown overseas on a foreign fort was in Libya, over Fort Derne, on the shores of Tripoli in 1805.

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Our flag certainly has a fascinating history! One more interesting fact: Shipwreck Kelly (1885-1952) was famous for sitting for long periods of time. Kelly once sat for forty-nine days on one flagpole! He estimated that he spent over 20,000 hours sitting on flagpoles! Flagpole sitting was a craze started in 1929 by folks in Baltimore.

And, a couple smiles:

What did the flag say to the other flag? (Nothing, it just waved!)

How is a flag like Santa Claus? (They both hang out at poles.)

Congratulations- you are now on your way to becoming a VEXILLOGIST, an expert on flags and their history!

******* Please enjoy this beautiful 5-minute video, *I AM YOUR FLAG*, by a gentleman whose voice you will recognize from your childhood! <https://youtu.be/Akfd9xYMSs4>**

Please take care! We look forward to seeing you soon.

A Memorial Day salute to our veterans! In addition, a huge thank you to all who are working to keep us safe during our war with the invisible enemy.

Bruce Burnett, Elaine Sederquist, and Marti Lecko
Harwinton Historical Society Program Committee

Upcoming Programs (All dates subject to change based on the current pandemic)

Creating Connecticut (Walt's new book) (*focus on the chapter "New England's Other Witch Hunt"*)- State Historian Walt Woodward: Sunday, June 7 @6:30- Harwinton Town Hall

Looking Backward -The Future Seen from the Past- Hamish Lutris: Sunday, September 20, 2020 @2- Harwinton Town Hall

They Called Her Reckless - A True Story of War, Love and One Extraordinary Horse (Korean War)- Author Janet Barrett: Sunday, October 18, 2020 @2- Harwinton Town Hall

First Ladies: High Tea & High Notions - Champions of Social Causes: Mariann Millard (Presented a different well-received "First Ladies" program previously.)- Sunday, November 15 @2- Harwinton Town Hall.

**\$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP
OFFERED BY THE HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

POST OFFICE BOX 84
HARWINTON, CONNECTICUT 06791
email: harwhistsoc@gmail.com

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the deadline for submitting a 2020 scholarship application to the Harwinton Historical Society has been extended.

Applications must now be postmarked by June 1, 2020

**Please mail to the *Harwinton Historical Society*
Attention: Scholarship
at the above address**

****Applications are available online at***
www.harwintonhistory.com/Historical_Society.htm

The applicant must be a student who is a resident of Harwinton and/or active in the Harwinton Historical Society.

The scholarship must be used to pursue post-secondary education by a graduating high school senior or a student currently pursuing an education beyond the high school level.

The applicant must show an interest in history/social science through coursework and/or experiences.

HISTORY FACTS FOR KIDS
Fun Facts about The American Flag

- There are 50 stars and 13 stripes on the American flag.
- History states that red, white and blue were chosen as the colors to represent valor (red), liberty and purity (white), and justice and loyalty (blue).
- There have been 27 official versions of the American flag, each with a different number of stars.