From the President
by Gail Sjo

March 2008 marked the second anniversary of the signing of the lease for the Sanborn House with the town. At the invitation of the Selectmen, the Historical Society gave an update on the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center to the Board of Selectmen at their weekly meeting. Bob Colt, Nancy Schrock, and I spoke about the Society’s progress on stabilizing and improving the building and opening it to the community.

We described the progress made to the house: regrading the ground around the house; installing new water table boards; repairing the plumbing; rebuilding three chimneys; adding exterior lighting; repairing masonry/stucco, installing a fire alarm and security system; general electrical work, removing overgrown trees and

(continued on page 2, President)

The Golden Days of Radio
by Ellen Knight

Even if you don’t remember the radio programs of the 1930s, you can’t help but feel nostalgic for those golden days after an evening with Mel Simons, as presented by the Winchester Historical Society on March 4 in its new home, the Sanborn House.

Simons, who has collected thousands upon thousands of old radio show, turned his hobby into a show, The Golden Days of Radio. He now has several programs on old-time radio and TV and appears on the Steve LeVeille Broadcast on WBZ radio with his Audio Clip Trivia Quiz after having been a guest on the Larry Glick Show for fourteen years and the Bob Raleigh Show for six years. He is also the author of five books (the last soon to be published) about old time TV and radio personalities and trivia.

(continued on page 2, Golden Days)
“I’m going to take you all on a wonderful trip down memory lane,” Simons said as he began his show. “It’s a terrific place.”

The radio shows of yesteryear, he said, were wonderful because “radio was the theater of the mind. You had to use your imagination.”

Many shows were on the radio for years. Each night listeners, even whole families, would gather around the radio to tune in their favorite shows. On Monday night, the Lux Radio Theater was on for 24 years. “It was like listening to a movie,” Simons said and played a clip from one show introducing Cecil B. DeMille.

“Tuesday was a wonderful night to laugh,” he said, especially because of Fibber McGee and Molly – whose hall closet alone brought a weekly laugh or, if it wasn’t included, brought a flood of mail in protest.

The radio comedians, Simons pointed out, never made fun of other people. People made fun of him.

Jack Benny, Simons said, was one of the three best loved performers as people, the others being Jimmy Durante and Eddie Cantor. This led into a musical trip down memory lane, with taped selections from shows in which Cantor and Maurice Chevalier sang “If you knew Susie” and Al Jolson sang “Toot Toot Tootsie.”

“Nothing taxed your minds,” Simons said, turning to another popular genre, “like the mystery shows.” There was Inner Sanctum, Suspense, The Whistler, I Love a Mystery, and the one whose famous introduction he played “Who know what evil lurks in the hearts of men” –The Shadow.

Taking out his accordion, Simons led a musical quiz on radio commercials. Which was the longest running jungle? Philip Morris.

“Wonderful songs and singers came out of radio,” Simons said and quizzed the audience on the themes for Kate Smith, Rudy Vallee, Bing Crosby, and ended up leading a sing along with such signature songs as Jolson’s “Mammy.”

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The show ended with a sing-along of an Irving Berlin song made famous by Kate Smith, once considered for legislation to become the new national anthem, “God Bless America.”

The evening was a thoroughly entertaining walk down memory lane for those who filled the program room in the Sanborn House, listened to voices of the great entertainers, laughed at the jokes which never die, guessed at the trivia questions, sang the songs, and enjoyed remembering great moments in radio.

Sanborn Alive!
by Carol K. Keller

The first floor of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center was offered for use to the community for the first time in December. A surprising variety of organizations, businesses and individuals have since held meetings and events at the facility, even in stormy January and February, a noted slow time. This use is just what was envisioned in the planning for the Center and in the lease between the Society and the Town.

The Selectmen indicated they were pleased with the progress and did not have questions. We invited each of them to visit the Sanborn House to see how the house is being used and to view the improvements. Coincidentally, Selectmen Jimmy Johnson, who said he had not been to the Sanborn for several years, participated in a Town Day Committee meeting at the house this past week. He told me he was very impressed.

Calling All Houses

It's that time again!

We are planning the October 2008 Historic House Tour and are looking for six homes to feature—Greek Revival, Italianate, Mansard, Shingle, Tudor, etc.

We love them all so if your historically significant home would be a good candidate for the tour, please get in touch with Nancy O’Herron (tel: 781-729-5919; e-mail: nancyfoherron@yahoo.com).

Non-profits have been among those using the Center. For example, the League of Women Voters held its brain-storming brunch on a Sunday in January, and the Winchester Friends of Art held its annual “Party for the Arts” to support art in the Winchester schools on a Saturday afternoon and evening in March.

The Winchester Town Day Committee, the Winchester Historical Commission, and the Winchester Cultural Council have held monthly meetings at the Center.

A private weekly art class held in the evening has been offered all fall and winter, and a Realty company offered its Tuesday morning educational program at the Center.

The Historical Society is using the Center for many committee meetings, Board meetings, and programs. The “Golden Days of

(continued from page 2, President)

We discussed two issues with the Selectmen, both of which are being addressed by the Society as described in past editions of this bulletin. The Sanborn House roof leaks, and each serious winter storm has brought more ceiling damage on the second and third floors. The Chair of our Building Committee is currently working with Gale Engineering to develop bid plans, details and specifications for competitive bidding on the roof that address the key problems so that repair work can begin. It is complicated by the need to honor the preservation restriction and coordinate the minor exterior changes (gutters) with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The second issue, which becomes a little less urgent with the arrival of warm weather, is the desire to replace the old boiler and convert to gas service for heating. This will be resolved over the summer.

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Corporate Sponsors

Book Ends
Children's Own School
Hall & Sullivan, Attorneys at Law
Mary McKenna and Associates, Inc.
Frank H. Duffy, Wood Flooring Specialists
Wine Country
Winchester Art and Frame

Winchester musician, Rich Greenblatt playing his vibraphone with his swinging jazz trio at the “Party for the Arts.”
Radio” program with Mel Simons filled the music room, and the popular annual pot luck dinner will be held on April 3. The May 13 Annual Meeting with the “Vote NO on Movie!” program by Ellen Knight will be held at the Sanborn House. A Strawberry Festival and Classic Car Show, a new Town Day event sponsored by the Society, will use the facility and grounds on June 7.

Two private parties have been held—a gala Christmas Eve party and a birthday celebration.

Over this time inquiries have been received from more than five other Winchester nonprofits, a theater group, two music groups, another private art class and other businesses.

To inquire about reserving the Sanborn House for a community, personal or business group, or to learn more about the Center call (781) 721-0135 or visit the Winchester Historical Society Web site.

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**January Program**

**Celebrating the New Year Party**

by Tom Michalak

On Sunday, January 6th, more than 80 members and their friends celebrated the holiday season with a gala reception at the Armenian Cultural Foundation on Mystic Street in Arlington. Harvey Diamond of the Winchester Musical School provided musical entertainment on the piano and played show tunes from the 1930’s.

Wonderful finger food was provided by members of the Board with wines and bartending provided by Steve Addezio of Wine Country. It was a clear day, so members enjoyed the view of the Mystic Lake from the windows of the Foundation’s meeting room.

Curator Ara Ghazarians gave a brief talk on the work of the Foundation and led tours of the library with its collection of oriental rugs, Tiffany lamps, and rare books, all collected by the founder Vahan Topalian.

The Armenian Cultural Foundation is a private library and museum dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of Armenian history, culture and letters. Most members knew the large house with four columns on the Mystic Lake from their travels on Mystic Street but few knew what the building represented and even fewer had ever visited. Members expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn and share one of the cultural treasures of our Winchester neighbor.

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From the Archives: Detective Work!

by Randy Bairnsfather

Sometimes, work at the Archival Center requires the skills of a detective. I listened to a message on the Archival Center’s answering machine one day in early February. It was from a woman in California calling to say she had a photograph of a house labeled on the back “Arthur’s home 1899” and the stamp “E.A. Holbrook Winchester, Mass.” She wondered who Holbrook was.

I was reluctant to place a long distance return call, not having any new information and knowing we need to pinch pennies at the Center. I remembered that Shirley Holbrook Parker has an ancestor Edwin A. Holbrook, so I called her first to see if he might have been a photographer. She said Edwin was a farmer who lived in Maine and died there in 1897. Therefore, there had to be another E. A. Holbrook with a Winchester connection.

The Winchester Public Library has an index to old issues of the *Winchester Star* and sure enough there was an obituary for E. A. Holbrook who died April 14, 1906 at age 52. Edgar Alanson Holbrook, who lived at 20 Dix St., had been a grocer in town for many years. He owned Holbrook & Adams grocery and later Richardson’s Market on Mt. Vernon St. But failing health forced Holbrook to retire early, and to fill his time he raised choice breeds of pigeons and took up photography. Eureka! Now I had something positive to tell the caller from California.

Maureen Keating of San Rafael said she found the old photograph of “Arthur’s” house at a local hospice thrift shop. She bought it and figured it might be of interest to a historical society, which is why she called both the Archival Center as well as the Historical Society’s tel-
Society Receives Local Grants
by Carol Keller

The Winchester Historical Society recently received three grants from local foundations and agencies. These grants will help the Society celebrate its 75th birthday and Winchester's history with expanded public programming and workshops for non-profit organizations in town. The Society greatly appreciates this community support.

The John and Mary Murphy Educational Foundation awarded a grant of $3,500 to support the mission of the Society to foster the appreciation of Winchester history. A series of public programs, on life in Winchester 75 years ago (1933), the year the Society was founded, is being supported by the grant. Programs that show both adults and...
(continued from page 5, Grants)  

children the reality and fantasies surrounding the lives of their grandparents and great-grandparents have been planned.

The Society has sponsored two weekend programs of films of the period including cartoons and popular feature films shown at the Lincoln School auditorium, and a program on the “Golden Days of Radio” hosted by Mel Simons. In May the Society will present “Vote NO for Movies” which covers the 1930’s debate on licensing movie theaters in Winchester, an issue highly contested. One of the goals of these programs is to increase the awareness of the mission of the Winchester Historical Society among younger people and residents new to our town. As always, these programs are free and open to the public.

The Winchester Cultural Council awarded the Historical Society an $800 grant for a public program on Artists of Winchester, including a speaker fee for the fall, and for display panels which will enable the Society to show works from its collection of art from Winchester artists.

The En Ka Society awarded a grant of $2,560 to fund two workshops for Winchester non-profit organizations focused on organizing and preserving their records and archives. These funds will also enable the Society to purchase dataloggers to track temperature and relative humidity in the Sanborn House basement as part of long-term planning for storage of collections, archives and records.

Thank you!

At the Movies

Films of 1933
by Tom Michalak

The 1930’s film programs honoring the 75th Anniversary of the Society went off without a hitch. The Marx Brother’s Duck Soup held on the weekends of January 26 and 27 was well attended with more than 30 guests, while Lady for a Day on February 9 was the best attended with more than 40 guests. The showing of The Invisible Man on February 10, the best film of the group, was unfortunately impacted by inclement weather.

These films were chosen for two reasons. They represent some of the most popular films of 1933 and they have stood the test of time as they still appeal to today’s audiences. The Marx Brothers’ Duck Soup is their greatest and funniest masterpiece – this classic comedy is a short but brilliant satire lampooning the blundering dictatorial leaders, Fascism and

New Town Day Event: Strawberry Festival and Classic Car Show

The Winchester Historical Society will host a Strawberry Festival and Classic Car Show on Town Day, June 7th. This new event for Town Day will be held on the grounds of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center from 1:00 - 4:00 PM.

Classic cars will be on display, strawberry shortcake, coffee and lemonade will be served, and tours of the Sanborn House will be offered. The Society is looking for owners of classic cars who would be willing to put them on display for the show. We need volunteers to help with this event. Please contact Nancy Kilker (tel: 781-729-8773, e-mail: hadas@comcast.net) or Sue Clark (tel: 781-721-0135) if you are interested.

(continued on page 7, Thanks),

Bud and Barbara Bing
The Birds
Ann Blackham
Judy and Jerry Blaine
Kyle Carney and Christopher Gregory
Children’s Own School
Lal C. Chugh
Marion Crandall
Diane and Jim Donovan
Marjorie Estridge
Allan Eyden
Alice Fitzgerald and David C. Bayer
The Fryklunds
Karen and Denis Fullerton
Phalia M. Ghikas
Jane Graham
Hall and Sullivan
John M. and Patricia Harrington Jr.
Greta Hawley
Martha and George. Hebb
The Hoyt Family
The Iovine Family
Richard and Linda Johnson
Bruce F. Jones
Josh Kapp and Carol Backs
Carol Keller and Peter G. Engeldrum
Carol and Jim Kent
Julie and Charles Khuen
Nancy and Wayne Kilker
Emilianne Koehnlein
Philippe Koenig
Dan and Martha Ladd
Cynthia Latta
Alexander and Barbara Leaf
Michael and Judy Manzo
John and Amy Mariani
Lane McGovern
The McPhee Family
Maureen Meister and David Feigenbaum
Laurie and John Minniti
Al and Judie Muggia
Mildred Newell
Diana and Jim Obbard
In memory of Ed O’Connell
Bill O’Connor
Deirdre O’Connor
Nancy O’Herron
George and Barbara Pacetti
Karl Packard, Red Hawk Studio
Stephen and Cecily Parkhurst
Jeff Ranahan
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Raphael
Allan Rodgers

(continued on page 7, Thanks)
authoritarian governments. *Lady for a Day* is a Cinderella fairy tale set in the early 1930’s. It is a delightful and charming mix of drama and comedy that earned four Academy Award nominations and propelled Frank Capra to the ranks of popular filmmakers. *The Invisible Man* is from an 1897 science fiction novella by H.G. Wells. One of the classic old horror/sci-fi movies from Universal Studios, *The Invisible Man* is among the original mad scientist films. It features special effects that still hold up surprisingly well. Each program also featured a Popeye cartoon and a cartoon advertisement *In My Merry Oldsmobile.*

This was the Society’s first experiment with film and we learned that the Lincoln School Auditorium is a great venue for film and other events, and probably the finest auditorium in Winchester. The sound and presentation equipment is first class, while the facility itself has good sound, a sloped floor, and seats up to 300.

The Education and Program Committee is considering additional films for the fall programs using the Lincoln School Auditorium, or perhaps a “members only” film series in the Sanborn House.

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**Save the Date! Shhh...**

*by Sue Clark*

Shhh...May 3, 2008. Save the date. Join us at a 1930’s Speakeasy. Come to 15 High Street at 7:30 PM.

Take a trip back in time to when men were dapper, and women were dames. Slip on your swankiest glad rags. Cut the rug to the ultra-smooth jazz of the Louise Grasmere band. Indulge in exceptional hors d’oeuvres, desserts and a Martini bar. Wine, spirits and beer selection by Wine Country. Plan to mingle with some real characters. Enjoy an evening of surprises and suspense.

A great time in support of a great cause–the Sanborn House renovation project. Mum’s the word—a donation of $100 per person will get you in the door. For more information call 781-721-0135.

**Vote NO on Movies!**

*Vote NO on Movies: How Winchester was protected from the ruination of its children, minds, morals, health, and safety.* is the highlight of the May 13, 2008 Annual Meeting and Program. Ellen Knight will present a program on the great theater controversy in Winchester, which lasted from 1917 until the first theater opened in 1937.

“The Great Movie Fight would stand out in the minds of many townspeople as the single most bitter confrontation of the generation—and in a community well-known for not suffering in silence. It was a long hard battle that raised tempers, ruined dispositions, and ruptured friendships of many years’ standing. When it was all over the town’s first and only motion picture theater was established in a handsome structure on Main Street.”*

The program will be preceded by the annual meeting and election of officers and directors.

* Bruce Winchester Stone, *The History of Winchester, Massachusetts, Vol. II,* p. 80

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(continued from page 6, Thanks)

Peggy and Jack Roll
Jane Rutherford and Steve Poulos
Priscilla Samoiloff
Nancy and Richard Schrock
Margot B. Semonian
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald L. Skates
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Smith
Jim Stansfield and Janet Snover
Louise Stebbins
Robert and Beverly Stone
Paula Swartz
Ian and Jennifer Swope
Judy and Noel Thyson
Evelyn Trageser
Mark and Wellner Tremallo
Dorothea Twomey
Candace and Peter Van Aken
Theodore Voelkel
Dinah Voorhies
Susan and George Vrotsos
Carol Watson-Phillips
Peter and Betsy Wild
Lynda Wills
Susan Williams
George and Holly Wood

(continued from page 6, Films)
Notices and Upcoming Events

Meetings
Board Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month (April 15, 2008, May 20, 2008, June 17, 2008), 7:30 P.M., in the Music Room, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.

Programs
April 6, 2008, 5:00-8:00 P.M.: “Spring Pot Luck Dinner”, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center; members and their guests only.

Schedule
May 3, 2008, 7:30-11:00 P.M., “1930’s Speakeasy Party” for the benefit of the Sanborn House renovation project; Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.
June 7, 2008; Town Day:
- Historical Trolley Tours (all day).
- Winchester Historical Society Booth (all day).
- Strawberry Festival and Classic Car Show, 1:00-4:00 P.M., grounds of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.

Help Wanted
The Winchester Historical Society has many volunteer opportunities, including:
- Managing Editor, Black Horse Bulletin
- Publisher, Black Horse Bulletin
- Volunteers for the Education and Programs Committee
- Volunteers to help transcribe Archival Center handwritten inventories
- Volunteers to help scan and catalog Archival Center collections

For more information, see the Society Web site (www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org) or call the Winchester Historical Society (tel: 781-721-0135); for information about opportunities at the Archival Center, you can also contact the Center directly (tel: 781-721-7146; e-mail: archives@winchester.us).