



# WINCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## BLACK HORSE BULLETIN

Volume 32, Number 3

July - September 2007

### From the President

*by Gail Sjo*

The Society's Board Development effort, which began last November, is nearly complete. Like all changes, it required time and debate, but it has produced a new Board structure that will allow the Society to move forward more effectively.

The major change is the reorganization of numerous ad hoc committees into seven Standing Committees, each with a clear charge and chaired by a Board member. This change allows the Board to better exercise its oversight responsibility as well as handle the Society's expanding role as a community leader and lessee of the Sanborn House.

The new committees and their responsibilities are:

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### Winn Watch Hand Factory

*By Ellen Knight*

On October 1, 1988, as some Society members may recall, a ceremony was held at McCord Winn Textron, 620 Washington St. A plaque was unveiled with the following inscription:

*This grove commemorates the 200<sup>th</sup> year of continuous manufacturing at this site.*

*Jeduthan Richardson Mill 1787*

*Harrison Parker Mahogany Mill 1840*

*James H. Winn & Son 1872*

*McCord Winn Textron 1987*

The plaque has reportedly disappeared, and the manufacturing history of the site has ended. The next dates are Faith Fellowship Ministries 1994 and Winchester Hospital 2004. However, the Hospital has agreed to retain a portion of the historic mill building at the site, a remnant of a once vital part of Winchester's economy.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Richardson family built a grist mill and a sawmill by the Aber-

jona River above Forest Street. The sawmill continued in operation through most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today the site is not associated as much with those mills as it is with the watch hand industry which operated there for over a century and whose buildings still stand. That business began in a barn in Waltham, where Bardwell Goodell and James Winn started to manufacture watch hands. In 1872, needing a better source of water power, they built a small factory on the site of the old Richardson mills. In 1896 Goodell sold his share to his partner's son. A new building was built in 1900 and grew with several additions as the

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Publisher: John Minniti

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#### Officers and Directors 2007 - 2008

President	Gail Sjo
Vice President	Carol Keller
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Paula Swartz	

#### Directors (through May 2009)

Bob Colt	Patrick Hall
Nancy Kilker	Cynthia Latta
Samuel Seidman	

#### Directors (through May 2010)

Susan Keats	Laurie Minniti
Nancy O'Herron	Robert Stone

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*James H. Winn & Son Watch Hand Factory, built in 1900.*

business expanded. In 1968, the Winn company became a division of the McCord Corporation, a Detroit-based supplier of the auto industry, and in 1987 became a subsidiary of Textron Inc.

When Winn and Goodell began, the watch manufacturing industry itself was just taking off in America. Because watch hands

had previously been made by hand and generally had to be imported into America, Goodell and Winn's machinery, which made mass production possible, put them in a position to succeed with a domestic product.

The business did succeed and adapted with changing times to also produce pointers for speedometers, gauges, compasses, and other machines. During war time, it manufactured components for clocks, gauges, aircraft, radar, ammunition, ordnance equipment, and guided missiles. In 1976 it was reported that the firm made 40,000 different types of pointers. Over time the company diversified, manufacturing other products, but it is still remembered as the Winn Watch Hand factory.



Annual Meeting

## Making History Fun

*by Carol Keller*

The highlight of the 2007 annual meeting of the Winchester Historical Society, held on Wednesday, May 23 at Town Hall, was the presentation by John Ott, Executive Director of the National Heritage Museum (NHM) in Lexington, "Making History Fun." Mr. Ott's theme was his challenge to build a history museum, the NHM, "into the fabric of the community" that would then invite and excite visitors in a "user friendly," fun environment. As the talk progressed it was clear that the Society will need to accomplish much the same tasks for the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center to thrive in Winchester.

The NHM, a gift from the Scottish Rite Freemasons to the people of Lexington, opened in 1975. (The headquarters of the Scottish Rite Freemasons in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States are also on the property.) Since only 3-5% of the visitors are Masons, the first challenge for the new museum was to transform the image of the donor organization from that of a secret society to an association of friendly, public-spirited men. For exhibits, the museum found that everyone likes to explore common history and memories, and has featured memory exhibits such as

summer camps, bicycles, neon signs, banjos and Barbie dolls. Mr. Ott also enjoys a bit of fun. The neon "Flying Yankee Restaurant" sign outside the museum repeatedly attracted hungry folks who were disappointed to find inside not an eatery but displays of neon signs of the 1950s. The Route 66 and Blue Monday (laundry) exhibits highlighted the common struggles of an earlier generation.

Mr. Ott emphasized that treasures from Winchester also attract attention. The clocks of

(continued on page 3, Annual Meeting)

(continued from page 1, President)

- ❑ **Board Affairs:** on-going assessment of the board's strengths and weaknesses and the nomination of new directors, Chair Bob Colt
- ❑ **Building:** planning, restoration and renovation of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center and grounds, Chair, David Stirling
- ❑ **Development:** planning and implementing fundraising activities, Interim Chair Gail Sjo
- ❑ **Education and Programs:** providing the Society and the general public with a rich menu of history-based programs and events, Chair Tom Michalak
- ❑ **Executive:** Board advisory group headed by the President
- ❑ **Finance:** oversight of finances and the business plan, Acting Chair Nancy Schrock
- ❑ **Outreach:** raising the Society's and Cultural Center's community profile, and communicating with our membership and the entire Winchester community, Chair Carol Keller.

Still in draft form is the Sanborn Building and Grounds Operations Committee, which will be completed and presented to the Board in September.

Now that the committees are established and Chairs appointed, the real work begins. Over the summer all the committees, with the exception of Board Affairs and Executive, will be looking for additional Society volunteers. Now is the perfect time to get involved – even if you have only an extra few hours a month or are unsure exactly how your skills and interests could be useful. Call 781-721-0135 to find out more about volunteering. We need you.

## Thanks for Your Generous Response

by Nancy Schrock

Our sincere thanks to the donors to the 2006 annual appeal:

JoAnne Austad  
 Robert and Randy Bairnsfather  
 Kay and Bob Bigelow  
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 Richard and Helen  
 Campobasso  
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 Isabel and Regis Pelloux  
 Elva and Tom Raphael  
 Allan Rodgers  
 Peggy and Jack Roll  
 Nancy and Richard Schrock

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(continued from page 2, Annual Meeting)

George McFadden have been on display for five years, kept there by popular demand. Tools from the collection of Frank Barnes are used continually in displays. Mr. Barnes appreciated that objects are integral to history, and that one generation's everyday tools are the next generation's yard sale material—and works of art when properly presented. But the pull is not just local. Statistics show large numbers of visitors from Florida, Texas, and California. Offering food and bathroom facilities are requirements for these traveling tour groups.



John Ott, guest speaker at the Historical Society Annual Meeting

The museum has widened its appeal through the use of its spacious grounds for car shows, children's digs for hidden "archeological" treasure, and outdoor concerts. Use of the auditorium for specials with Ken Burns, Antiques Roadshow personnel, Skinner antique evaluations, and concerts have all drawn in people to discover that history can be fun. Fun, however, is balanced with serious displays on war topics and Hanscom Field's contributions to the nation's defense.

A brief business meeting preceded the talk with President Gail Sjo honoring retiring board members Marilyn Preston, Judy Thyson and Jean Twitchell. A rose plant was presented to Jean in honor of her 25 years of service to the Society. Ms. Sjo also reviewed the accomplishments of the 2006-2007 program year. Bob Colt, Board member and Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of nominations for board membership and the nominees were elected by a voice vote of the members present. Treasurer Nancy Schrock then presented the annual Treasurer's report.



Town Day

## Trolley Tours Highlight Society's Town Day Events

by Tom Michalak

Town Day 2007 saw more than 275 people enjoy another round of the Winchester Historical Society's popular trolley tours. The tours, made possible by the generous support of the Winchester Savings Bank, followed some old routes and inaugurated some new ones. Society members and other volunteers narrated the trips.

Middlesex Canal. This ever-popular tour was led by Margie Harvey. Ms. Harvey described the Winchester section of the canal, which connected the industrial cities along the Merrimack to the

Atlantic seacoast. The Canal entered Winchester near Sandy Beach on the Upper Mystic Lake, crossed the lake on an aqueduct,

(continued on page 4, Trolley Tours)

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headed toward Wedge Pond, then made a 90-degree turn near the intersection of Palmer and Middlesex streets to follow Horn Pond Brook to Woburn and Horn Pond. While the water is long gone, the ditch and banks are still in evidence in several places along the route.

Main Street to Symmes Corner. Susan Keats conducted a tour of Main Street from the center south to Symmes Corner and back through the Bacon Street area, focusing on the Black Horse Tavern and homes of various renowned inventors and town leaders from Winchester's past.

Development of North Main Street. John Clemson led a building-by-building tour of north Main Street. His tour provided a whole new way of looking at the historic buildings and the changes that have become part of this gateway to the town center.

Winchester's Historic Natural Treasures. Peter Wild described his favorite spots to see the Town's "champion trees." Guided by a personal and professional interest in tree preservation, Peter provided a new look at trees which we pass without giving a thought as to how much of Winchester's history has passed under their branches.

Preserving Winchester: Hamilton Farm and the Sanborn House. Matthew Bronski led a tour to two historic properties: Hamilton Farm, which the Town is in the process of purchasing, and the



*Laurie Minniti, Dinah Voorhies, and Tom Michalak assist patrons at the Trolley Tour booth on Town Day.*

Sanborn House, owned by the Town and now leased to the Winchester Historical Society for transformation into the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.

Aberjona River. Ellen Knight followed the route of the river, one of the major elements in the development of Winchester, and talked about the past, present, and future of the river and development along its banks.

Special thanks to John Minniti, Dinah Voorhies, Laurie Minniti and Tom Michalak, who helped with the coordination of the tours, ticketing, and loading/unloading of the trolleys.



Annual Potluck

## An Evening With Sister Elizabeth

*by Dinah Voorhies*

Winchester Historical Society members who attended the Spring potluck dinner found themselves enjoying an added treat after the meal. Two special guests had been invited - Sister Nancy Swift and Sister Elizabeth Farragher, both of the Religious of Christian Education. Both had also called the Sanborn House home when it was the residence connected with Marycliff Academy, the order's school next door.

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Margot B. Semonian  
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Skates  
Lawrence Smith  
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Smith  
Elizabeth and Bob Spiller  
Janet Snover and Jim Stansfield  
David and Judith Storeygard  
Paula Swartz  
Mr. and Mrs. Noel Thyson  
Dorothea Twomey  
Theodore Voelkel  
Dinah Voorhies  
Susan Williams  
Lynda Wills  
Ellen and David Wilson  
George and Holly Wood



Welcome

*by Nancy Kilker*

We welcome the following members who have joined the Winchester Historical Society recently:

John and Wendy Book  
Darin Ernst and Mary Chen  
Jon French  
Marian Fuller  
Carol and Jim Kent  
Philippe Koenig  
Mark Kritzman and Elizabeth Gorman  
John and Amy Mariani  
Robert and Margaret McIndoe  
Karen and Daniel Nocera  
Scott Ridlon  
Mary Ellen Rourke-Falvey  
Cynthia Samoiloff  
Carolyn Schatz and Jack LeMenager  
Rosemary Sullivan  
Candace and Peter Van Aken

If you need a Winchester Historical Society membership application or have membership questions, please contact Nancy Kilker (e-mail: phadas@comcast.net) or Dinah Voorhies (e-mail: dinahv@rcn.com; tel: 781-526-8058), or see the Society Web Site



## Corporate Sponsors

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**Please be Seated**

*by Nancy Schrock*

Participants at the Society's Potluck Dinner responded generously to a request for funds for elegant wooden folding chairs as a housewarming for the Sanborn House. We are pleased to thank:

- Robert and Randy Bairnsfather
- Lal C. Chugh
- Yolande and Walter Finneran
- Robert and Elizabeth Goeke
- Jean Herbert
- Kathleen and Clarence Kemper
- Diana and Jim Obbard
- Jack and Peggy Roll
- Joseph and Janet Senna
- David and Fenton Stirling
- Wendy and Bill Swanton
- Judy and Noel Thyson
- Dinah and Laura Voorhies
- Linda and Jim Whitehead
- Ellen and David Wilson

A gift from Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Skates in honor of Trudy Kirken-dall will be used to purchase four chairs in her memory.



*Bill Swanton is the first donor to contribute to our "chair drive," an effort to purchase 60 high-quality folding chairs for the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center*

The furniture is on order and should be in place for activities in the fall. If you would like to contribute to furnishing the Sanborn house, please send your donations to P.O. Box 127, Winchester, MA 01890. Each chair costs \$56.50.

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Sister Elizabeth, who came to the house in 1948 and was, for a time, the principal of the school, spoke to the assembled group in the Music Room and Library about her years there. Anyone who might have expected a solemn "talking to," in the gimlet eye and poised ruler style, was in for a shock. Sister Elizabeth kept everyone chuckling for almost an hour with her anecdotes and answers to questions. Her talk brought to life the scenario of how the house was actually used during those years.

The wood-paneled Arts & Crafts-style "Study" was where the chaplain was served breakfast, though he lived separately in an annex. Dormitory rooms for the resident nuns were upstairs. The odd placement of a radiator perpendicular to the fireplace in one of the upstairs rooms probably dated from a brief time when the school took in boarding students. The Music Room served as the chapel, physically and spiritually the center of the house, she said, "where our lives became a peaceful oasis." Outside the French doors, where its underlying concrete platform still stands, was a statue of the Blessed Virgin.

One audience member asked how food was prepared for the group, and we heard that the approximately 20 nuns took turns with the cooking. The result, according to Sister Elizabeth, was at times gourmet food, but at

other times merely "novice food." One rule of the order was that there was no talking allowed until after breakfast, a concept that she commented might be "helpful in homes today."

When discussing the loveliness of the house, her words became poetic as she mentioned the



*Society member and guests enjoy dinner in the newly cleaned and painted Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.*

stained glass window - "unusually beautiful when the sun's rays play upon it" - and talked of the "panoply of beauty" found in the long path of peonies that once ran between the house and school. The downside, she said, was having to pick the Japanese beetles off them by hand.

She recounted their first view of television at the home of the caretaker and his wife, with the Sisters gathered 'round, sitting on beds and on the floor. Sister Nancy caused a good laugh when, toward the end, someone asked Sister Elizabeth if she had always been so lively and fun-loving. Sister Nancy interjected "Oh, she's actually calmed down a lot."

It was interesting to recollect, after Sister Elizabeth's talk, that during the Marycliff era the Sanborn House began to fulfill much of the public mission that we see for it today. It was a place of education, of cultural exchange (the Sisters, she said, came from France, Switzerland, Germany, England and Ireland, as well as America), and of nurturing for the soul. Two phrases she used especially brought to mind the San-

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(continued from page 5, Annual Potluck)

born work ahead. One was a quote from Boston poetess Amy Lowell: "Spend all you have on loveliness, and never count the

cost." The other is the motto of the order itself, as translated from the French: "Forward! God wills it!"



Volunteer Recognition

## Red Carpet Celebration for Society Volunteers

by Gail Sjo

The nominations were made and the votes were counted. With the March sun shining through the French doors of the Music Room in the Sanborn House, the names of 75 "winners" were announced as the red carpet was literally rolled out for our generous, talented, and energetic Society volunteers.



Jean Twitchell's golden award is for being the longest continuous volunteer.

The honorees spanned the decades, both in terms of their volunteer involvement and age--some having worked with the Society since the 1980's and other just beginning in 2007; high school students to retired individuals. And while a diverse group, the one quality each demonstrated was a desire to support the Society's programs and projects by making a personal investment in the Society. For an all volunteer organization like ours, this special group's willing-

ness to give their time, expertise and energy is what makes the Board's dreams and plans a reality.

Special "golden" awards were given to Jean Twitchell and Rose Marie Cammarata for their extensive volunteer work; Peter Engledrum, Bradley Ross, Jim Obbard, and John VonOpDorp, for being the Handyman Group extraordinaire; Maureen Meister, for serving as editor of the Architects of Winchester Series; Randy Bairnsfather for acting as the Town Archives coordinator; Cynthia Latta, for being a leader of the cleaning and fix-it crew at the Sanborn; and John Minniti, the retired managing editor of the Black Horse Bulletin for creating a new design and a new publication process. With good food, wine, and lots of laughter, the event was so well received that another volunteer celebration will be undoubtedly held next year.



Handyman's Delight

## The Sanborn House Handyman Team

by Peter G. Engeldrum

One of the larger goals of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center (SHHCC) is the restoration of the House to its former beauty. This is a multi-year multi-million-dollar project, but the concern of the past year has been to get the House in a usable condition. After years of

(continued on page 7, Handyman)

## Talented New Members Join Society's Board of Directors

by Bob Colt

The Winchester Historical Society Annual Meeting took place on May 23rd at the Town Hall and three talented people were voted in as members of the Board. Donna Patalano, Bob Stone and Susan Keats each bring a variety of skills to the Board, which meets monthly to set the policy and direction of the Winchester Historical Society and the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.

Donna Patalano comes on board as the secretary of the Society and is a Winchester appellate attorney who previously served as an assistant district attorney in the Suffolk District Attorney's Office. She is the mother of two children and serves on the Board of Appeals for the Town of Winchester.

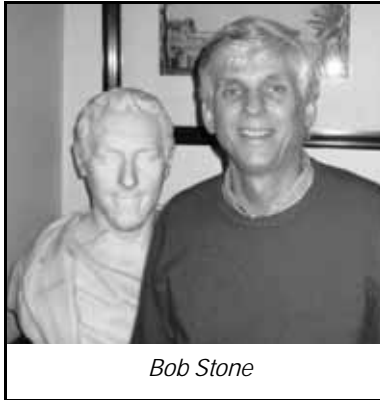


Donna Patalano

Bob Stone comes to the Board with a passion for history and genealogy and has been active in the archives management of the First Congregational Church. He is a financial planner with Smith Barney and has two grown children.

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(continued from page 6, Directors)



*Bob Stone*

Susan Keats comes back to the Board with the experience of having been a past president of the Society. In the 1980s, she was the second archivist for the Town of Winchester and has taken that skill to serve Fidelity Investments in Boston. She has three grown children.



*Susan Keats*

The three were joined in new terms on the Society Board with very active Board holdovers Laurie Minniti and Nancy O'Herron to complete the sixteen-member Board.

They are already attending meetings and joining the many committees that share the work of your Winchester Historical Society.

This new group brings a true zeal for history and culture and these new members are seen as leaders in the drive to establish the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center as a true community center for the Town of Winchester.

(continued from page 6, Handyman)

Town budget pressures, with the resulting benign neglect, there is an almost endless list of repair items that need to be addressed. Some items are small, while others are more significant in scope.

Given this state of affairs, the "Handyman Team" was formed in the fall of 2006, a sub-committee which I head, operating as a subgroup of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. The purpose of the Team is to address those pressing repair jobs that would be difficult or expensive to contract out—and of course, to save the Society some money. We also have provided advice on larger projects, such as the roof repair, and made other suggestions for getting the House open.

It has been a pleasure to discover that Winchester has quite a number of highly talented people willing to lend a hand. The Team originally consisted of Bradley Ross and myself, with Richard Schrock as an adjunct member. We were fortunate to have Jim Obbard, John VanOpdorp and his son Davis, and Doug Marmon join us along with a new recruit, Philippe Koenig. Perhaps it is not surprising that the team is heavily weighted towards present or former engineers and scientists. Operationally, we are not a very formal or highly structured group. Our modus operandi is to meet periodically, especially with a new team member, and discuss the priority projects and develop a consensus about what we think is the best practical way to do the repairs. We operate very loosely and flexibly, mainly because

Team member's schedules are not fixed. Some projects are one person projects, while others may require extra hands at some point.

Not all of the completed Team projects are visible. Such invisible projects include mapping the electrical circuits (so we know which of the six electrical panels on three floors contains the blown fuse or tripped circuit breaker), freeing up sticky doors so they open, close, and latch easily, repairing window frames, and glazing and replacing sash cords. More visible projects include closing up the interior holes in the walls left by removal of the old room air conditioners, wall repairs, painting, counter top and dishwasher installation in the kitchen, and periodic lawn mowing, among others. Given the age of the Sanborn House, repairs often require considerable ingenuity in developing a solution and finding or making the needed parts.

It is difficult to estimate accurately the monetary savings to the Society of the work done. A conservative estimate would be somewhere between \$15,000 and \$20,000. As with many repair projects, the material costs are often quite small compared with the labor and time involved.

Many thanks to all Handyman Team members for their valuable contributions to reviving the Sanborn House. Much still needs to be done to keep the SHHCC operating with improving efficiency and safety. The Handyman Team is eager to serve – and have some fun while at it!

### Thank You, Society Booth Volunteers!

The Society would like to thank the following members for serving as volunteers at the Society's booth on Town Day:

- |                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Rosemarie Cammarata | Laurie Minniti |
| Joyce Crist         | Jean Twitchell |
| Kate Fitzgerald     | Nancy Schrock  |
| Nancy Kilker        | Gail Sjo       |
| Carol Keller        | Susie Vrotsos  |



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## Notices and Upcoming Events

**Meetings** – Board Meetings – Third Tuesday of the month (September 18, 2007): 7:30 P.M., Music Room, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center. The Board does *not* meet during July or August.

**Programs** – July and August, 2007: The Society does not conduct programs during the summer months.

September, 2007, 7:30-10:00 P.M.: Speaker, topic, and date to be determined; watch for the announcement.

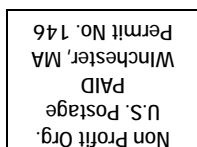
**Help Wanted** – The Historical Society needs:

- Managing Editor, *Black Horse Bulletin*
- Editor, *Black Horse Bulletin*
- Volunteers for the Education and Programs Committee

For more information, see the Historical Society web site (Volunteer Opportunities), or contact Gail Sjo (tel: 781-729-6560; e-mail: sjogail@aol.com) or Carol Keller (tel: 781-721-4643; e-mail: kellerck@aol.com)

The *Black Horse Bulletin* needs volunteers to write articles about Winchester's history. If you would like to see your bylined article in print, please contact Gail Sjo (tel: 781-729-6560; e-mail: sjogail@aol.com) or call the Winchester Historical Society (tel: 781-721-0135).

The Town Archival Center needs volunteers to scan and catalog its postcard collection and transcribe tapes. If you can spare a few hours, please contact the Society volunteers who operate the Center (tel: 781-721-7146; email: archives@ci.winchester.ma.us) or call the Winchester Historical Society (tel: 781-721-0135).



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