



From the President

Will the Town of Winchester demolish one of its most valuable treasures? The historic carriage house at the Sanborn campus has recently come under threat of demolition. In response, the Winchester Historical Society and the Winchester Historical Commission, as the advocates for our town's cultural heritage, wish to alert the community to its potential loss and call for a long-term plan for its preservation and use.

The Town has a longstanding commitment to the Sanborn campus. The Sanborn Estate has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1981 in recognition of its architectural significance. The house and its adjacent carriage house were built in 1907 as a country estate for Oren Sanborn, scion of the Chase & Sanborn coffee fortune, on a nine-acre

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Drawing Towards Home

by Ellen Spencer

On Tuesday, October 4, 2011 the Winchester Historical Society, in collaboration with the Friends of the Winchester Library, presented the slide lecture "Drawing Towards Home: Designs for Domestic Architecture from Historic New England" at the public library. Lorna Condon, curator of the Library and Archives at Historic New England, spoke about the "Drawing Toward Home" project, which consists of a traveling exhibition and catalogue. The project explores the history of domestic design based on architectural drawings from Historic New England's extensive collections.

Ms. Condon began her talk with an informative overview of the history of Historic New England (HNE, and

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Ms. Condon (left) and Ms. Meister prepare for their presentations.

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Society Executive Director
Rebekah Beaulieu

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*The Carriage House of the Sanborn Estate, December, 2012.
Photo: Rebekah Beaulieu*

land parcel on the edge of what was then the developed section of Winchester. The house and its outbuilding were designed in what is generally referred to as the Beaux-Arts style by the Boston architectural firm of Hill and James. This firm was known more for its institutional than its domestic designs, making both structures unique additions to the Boston area's architectural history. The firm designed one other house in Winchester in the same style at 4 Swan Road--suggesting a common appreciation for fine architecture.

Rare architectural gem

The Sanborn estate is a rare domestic example, notable for its opulence of design and decoration. In fact, the construction was reported to have cost more than \$250,000 (comparable to about \$6 million today).

The Town purchased the Sanborn estate in 1969. The Town Archives occupied the Carriage House until they were moved to Town Hall. The lands were left as green space and became a favorite site for winter sledding. In 2004, the Town and the Historical Society received a Preservation Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on the reuse of the Sanborn House and grounds. Neighbors and community groups were involved in developing long-range plans. Although the plans focused on the house, it concluded, "The Carriage House in its current location is integral to the historic setting of the Sanborn House and should be retained and preserved for future use."

Town Meeting twice affirmed its commitment to preserving the Sanborn House and grounds. In 2006, Town Meeting approved the lease of the House to the Historical Society, thereby assuring that the land would not be privately developed. In 2009, Town Meeting gave the house a permanent preservation restriction, which made it possible to receive state grants for its restoration.

The Carriage House was boarded up when construction on the new Ambrose building began, but until that time it had served as the offices of the Mystic Valley Early Intervention Program. The current condition of the building, although compromised by a leaking roof and a consequent interior mold, is structurally sound. In fact, many of the problems are localized, limited and correctable. DPW has already stopped the leaks. What is needed now is information about real costs to stabilize and return the building to use. They are likely to be considerably less than demolition.

Public and private partnership

The Winchester Historical Society, the current steward for the Sanborn House, has worked with the Town to bring an aging building into active use. The Society has been successful in raising funds through grants and private donations, tangibly demonstrated by the remarkable transformation the house has undergone in recent years. In the past year alone, the house has been updated to include a new front walk and an ADA-compliant bathroom. Additionally, its exterior wood trim was repainted. If you haven't seen it lately, call the society to schedule a visit. You'll be impressed with the results. The Society has a proven track record in planning, managing, and completing building projects on time and within budget.

It is time to reopen the discussion about the Carriage House and its possible future use. The Historical Society and Historical Commission look forward to working with the relevant boards, commissions, elected officials and other community groups to develop a plan for its reuse.

This letter was written and submitted to the Winchester Star in October, 2011 by Jack LeMenager and John Clemson of the Winchester Historical Commission, and Robert Colt and Nancy Schrock of the Winchester Historical Society.

Update: March, 2012:

The issue of the reuse of the Carriage House has been much discussed since this letter was written, with genuine concern for the future of this 105 year-old building. The School Committee has formed a subcommittee, which will carefully look at the alternatives for this historic building. Stay tuned for the next steps that will emanate from this important subcommittee.

Drawing Towards Home - continued from page 1

formerly known as the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, SPNEA.) The audience was treated to a brief biography of Sumner Appleton, Jr., the organization's founder and visionary. Founded in 1910, HNE's mission was and is to preserve and protect New England's architectural and cultural heritage. Early on, Appleton's priority was collecting photographs and architectural drawings. This focus quickly expanded to include houses themselves, written materials, the decorative arts, and ephemera. Today, HNE also offers a wide variety of public and educational programs, exhibitions and preservation services. Among the Winchester-related material shown by Ms. Condon were the original plans for Edward Ginn's estate by McKim, Mead & White. HNE also houses the complete archives of well-known Winchester architect F. Patterson Smith.

"Drawing Toward Home" is a selection of 100 architectural and design drawings, which range in date from the 18th century to the 1970's. It showcases a wide variety of building types as well as some landscape and interior designs. After Ms. Condon's talk, Winchester's Maureen Meister, an architectural historian and author, spoke about the Winchester projects included in the exhibition and catalogue, for which she wrote the catalogue entries. Chief among these are the house and garden designs by Frank Chouteau Brown for the Curtis Circle house of Thomas Dreier and his wife Blanche Nowell, and the house Royal Barry Wills built for himself at 5 Wood Lane. The brick Tudor Dreier house, called "Snug Gables", was featured in the British magazine *Country Life* in 1923. Ms. Meister also noted that Royal Barry Wills designed many other houses in Winchester, as well as the Christian Science church. His firm, which is still in existence today, was more recently selected to build the Arthur Griffin Center for Photography.

An appreciative crowd was on hand to enjoy the evening and copies of the exhibition catalogue were selling briskly. The Historic New England Archives and Library are open to the public (free for HNE members; a nominal fee for others) but you should really join!



The G.V. Mooney ship barometer (patented in 1865) now in the Society collection.

Weather Forecasting before the Weather Channel

By Rebekah Beaulieu

Barometers were once used to predict changes in weather. We are fortunate to have a rare example of a rare combination barometer, thermometer, and clock in our collection. The G. V. Mooney ship barometer was patented in 1865 and sold by Arnaboldi & Co. of New York. According to our records, it was given to the Society "by the Misses Mason" of Winchester.

We are also fortunate to have Wayne Paskerian as a current member. Wayne is an expert in barometer restoration and generously donated his time and ex-

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Have You Seen Our New Website?

by Rebekah Beaulieu

In December of 2011, the Society launched a new and improved website that combines the previous Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center and Winchester Historical Society websites. Volunteer Arica Bahr Thornton guided the project with consultation from Executive Director Rebekah Beaulieu and Board member Nancy Schrock.

She worked with both the Society and the Winchester Archival Center resources to structure a site that will eventually include historical document archives. The website features a listing of upcoming programs, Sanborn House rental information, Sanborn House history, information about the Society, News items, a listing of Society publications, and a section on the ways the community can be involved with the Society and Sanborn House. A listing of local genealogical and historical sources is also presented by the Winchester Archival Center.

The Society hopes the new website will provide an easy and fun way for all of its members to learn about the Sanborn House, the Society, and all of the current offerings. To take a look, please visit www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org.

The Society and Sanborn House websites have evolved through several versions and the Society would like to acknowledge and thank the major contributors to this progression—Diane Donovan, Ed Davis, Margo Attaya and Douglas Marmon. These Webmasters have given the Society a continuous Internet and thus, world presence.

The High School Question

by Ellen Knight

As the Town of Winchester begins a feasibility study for the high school, one option that must be studied is a new building. Answering this was also a challenge when the current high school was built.

In 1963, when the high school was using what is now the McCall Middle School, Town Meeting created a Permanent Building Committee (PBC) to study the situation and make recommendations. Its four main alternatives were: (1) build additions to the high school and to one junior high, (2) remodel and add onto the Lynch Jr. High and make it the high school, (3) join the high school and McCall school together with a new addition (closing off that block of Main Street) and build a new junior high, and (4) build a new high school on a new site.

Though the most expensive option, the PBC recommended a new school. The difficult question was where to put it. The PBC thought 30 acres was required. The largest lots east of Cambridge Street included the Leonard Field-Tufts Road area, the former Beggs & Cobb land plus adjacent Town park land, and the Town Forest. West of Cambridge Street there were several tracts of land of suitable size.

The PBC recommended the 46-acre Turkey Ridge tract on the west side. Although the majority of Town Meeting favored a new school, it instructed the PBC to find a more central site. By then the Beggs & Cobb land was under development for apartments (Parkview). The solution was to use an almost 11-acre parcel of park land to the east of the railroad above Skillings Road, plus a 16-acre parcel to the west which it had at first rejected as "not suitable for playing fields" because it included the Aberjona river.

These were not easy sites to develop. In the three years between the committee report and its request for an appropriation, the estimated cost about doubled. And the actual cost was higher still. In 1968, Town Meeting approved a proposal to spend over \$10 million on a new high school building and playing fields at Skillings Road. Crimp, Brown & Fisher was hired to design the school.

The site was a major challenge. During the 19th century the railroad cut through what was once a meadow bordering the river. The water became industrially polluted, and as it passed through culverts under the railroad it spread into ponds on both sides of the tracks. The pond shores were used as dumps. Refuse from the Beggs & Cobb tannery started to fill the western pond, and, after the incin-

erator was built in 1960, incinerator ash was put there. In 1968, the Town hired Richard White Sons, Inc., to do the new playfields, which required putting the river into three culverts and regrading the area.

Well before the 1960s, the eastern pond had been transformed into park land. Beginning about 1917, a park was developed by filling in the northern end of Judkins Pond over the course of several years. Fill deposited on the soft mud there sank and required refilling. The field was shored up in the 1950s when the Skillings Bypass was built and was compacted and reinforced as a field in 1962. It was supposed to be firm enough to build on.

The project had other challenges. Opposition led to a special Town Meeting to reconsider the appropriation, which failed. Bids came in \$3.1 million over budget, requiring Town Meeting action for an additional \$3.1M, which passed. Continued opposition produced a referendum petition which led to a town vote meant to stop the expenditure. But, after voters supported Town Meeting's decisions, in January 1970 a new round of bids came in, and the White Construction Company was awarded the contract to build the school. The building was first occupied by students in April 1972.

In the 1960s, proponents of a new school acknowledged the price was high, but it was supposed to solve the secondary school space problem once and for all. Now another building committee is again addressing the space problem. By the end, it should be seen if the site and design decisions of the past retain validity for the future.

*Weather Forecasting before the Weather Channel
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looking handsome, it will be mounted in the Oak Room in time for you to see at our Potluck Dinner.

One of the wonderful results of having the Sanborn House as a home for the Historical Society is the opportunity it provides to display some of our beautiful artifacts which have been in storage for thirty years. If you have objects that relate to the history of Winchester and are interested in donating them to our collection, please call 781-721-0135. We also welcome donations of expertise or funds to aid in restoration.

Donations!

The Society would like to thank the many friends who have contributed to the Society this past year:

Annual Appeal, 2010 (March 1, 2011 to February 28, 2012)

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Sue and Chris O'Connell
Cindy Stone and David Kronberg
Berta Swanson

Annual Appeal, 2011 (November 1, 2011 to February 28, 2012)

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Deck the Halls

by Laurie Minniti

Deck the halls with garlands of holly, wreaths of evergreens, arrangements of evergreens and fresh flowers, trees with glittery ornaments and twinkling lights, wonderful finger food, and wine, and voila! It is the holiday season at the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.

On Sunday, the fourth of December the Historical Society held its annual Holiday Party. It was a time for members to greet old friends, make new friends and get in the holiday spirit. This year, thanks to the McCall Middle School show choir, Jubilation, Society members joined in the holiday spirit. Under the direction of Joel Buford, the students performed a medley of carols and pop holiday tunes with dulcet tones and infectious enthusiasm

The party was a warm, joyous occasion that made the Sanborn House into the Sanborn "Home" for the holidays.

The Society would like to thank the Jubilation choir and Mr. Buford, as well as Kent Porter Hamann and her "elves" for the decorations—each of who helped so much to make the event a grand success.

Donations! Capital Campaign (March 1, 2011 to February 28, 2012) - continued from page 5

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Mr. Kenneth Vacovec
Candace Van Aken
Ms. Annette Voorhes
Mary Werlin
Jim and Linda Whitehead
Peter and Betsy Wild
Susan Williams
Courtenay and Robert Williams



Society members and guests enjoy the music at the Holiday Party. The Jubilation choir from McCall Middle School present their holiday songs to an enthusiastic gathering. (photo: Peter Engeldrum)



The Mark Pucci Quartet provided the music. (photo: Bill Swanton)



Time to dance. (photo: Bill Swanton)

Celebration of New Year's Eve

by Betsy Cregger

On New Year's Eve 2011, elegantly attired guests arrived at the estate of Oren and Rena Sanborn (today's Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center) for the first Annual New Year's Eve Soiree at Aigremont (the name the Sanborns gave to their estate.) The recent restorations of both the inside and outside of the home now provide the perfect setting for events that can rival the original turn of the 20th century happenings that the Sanborns might have hosted.

The House glittered with a lovely décor designed by Kent Porter Hamann which perfectly set the stage for the holiday season and the glamour of the evening. Forty formally dressed guests first enjoyed delicious appetizers and cocktails followed by great food, and dancing to the music of the Mark Pucci Quartet. The menu featured beef tenderloin and chicken marsala plus accoutrements, and great desserts. Catering was provided by Harvest Catering of Wakefield and drinks were provided by Wine Country of Winchester.

The first part of the entertainment was light jazz and standards for cocktails. Upon discovering that one of the guests, Alexis Cregger, was an opera singer, demand rose for her to join the band for a rendition of "Someone to Watch over Me" which was performed to great acclaim.

After dinner, the band kicked into rock and roll and the floor was filled with dancers for the remainder of the evening. Everyone was having so much fun that no one could believe that the New Year had arrived when the champagne toast arrived at the end of the evening.

A repeat of the event is planned for December 31st, 2012. Plan now to celebrate New Year's Eve 2012 in Winchester, and attend a soiree in the elegant historic setting of the Sanborn House.

The Society would like to thank all of the Board, Society members and vendors who contributed their efforts to make this event such a success. And of course, thanks go to the attendees.



Betsy and Alexis Cregger welcome Judy and Michael Manzo to the party.
(photo: Walter Finneran)



Bill and Wendy Swanton (l) chat before dinner with Peter and Betsy Wild.
(photo: Walter Finneran.)



Jack Twomey, Susan Keats (l) and Nancy Schrock enjoy the evening.
(photo: Walter Finneran)

Meetings	Board meetings are held at the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center on the third Tuesday of the month (exception, March 27, 2012) at 7:30 PM. The meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.
Programs	<p>Tuesday, March 20, 2012: “The Birth of Winchester Hospital: The Trials and Triumphs of the Early Years,” Ellen Knight, historian 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM, The Jenks Center, 109 Skillings Road</p> <p>Saturday, April 28, 2012: Annual Pot Luck Dinner, 6:00 to 9:00 PM, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center</p> <p>Tuesday, May 22, 2012 Annual Meeting: “Sanborn House Landscape, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”, Martha Lyon, landscape architect, adjunct professor of landscape architecture at the University of Massachusetts</p> <p>Saturday, June 2, 2012: Town Day, Trolley Tours from the Commons, and Strawberry Festival at the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center</p>
Help Wanted	The Society has many volunteer opportunities. Some tasks can be done at home, others in the Sanborn House. You can help with our programs, collections, or the Sanborn House. For more information, contact Rebekah Beaulieu (781-721-0135; email director@winchesterhistoricalsociety.com) or Nancy Schrock (781-721-1229; email: ncschrock@verizon.net).

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