



THE JONATHAN DICKERMAN HOUSE

## The Hamden Historical Society Newsletter Summer 2001

### **BARN AGAIN: Thank you all**

In our Society Newsletter during the winter of 1996, our then President, Brian Poirier, wrote, *“The Rectory Barn, a beautiful and shy Victorian Lady on Whitney, is no longer a wallflower. Her number has been picked and she may soon do a dance of death at the Wrecker’s Ball.”*

Since 1994, the Historical Society began discussions with the barn’s owners, Centerville Lumber, exploring how this remarkable, decorative structure could be saved. As time passed, we were unable to develop a plan to prevent its demolition or its removal. Through those years, the Roos family exercised patience as it hoped that the Society would somehow undertake such a monumental project to preserve this Hamden treasure. By 1999, time had run out and the orchestra tuned itself for the requiem.

In a last effort, the Society contacted State Senator Joseph Crisco who was able to direct a state grant to the Society. This began our concerted effort to raise the balance of the needed money, publicize the cause, encourage the support of town officials and coordinate this historic preservation project to relocate the Rectory School Barn. Without State Senator Crisco’s effort, there would have been no reprieve for this Victorian Lady.

This last January 2001, the Hamden Legislative Council approved Mayor Amento’s resolution authorizing the town to accept the Rectory School Barn as a gift from Mr. Roos of Centerville Lumber. Our Society’s fund raising efforts for well over a year finally paid off; the Rectory School Barn was to be **SAVED**. We thank the many Society members for their contributions and appreciate the work that others did in saving one of Hamden’s jewels.

Dave Berto and Paul Cigal of the Chesnut Oak Co. from West Suffield, CT, acted as general contractors for the project. Their expertise and guidance were important to our success. The movers were Nickolas Brothers from New York. During the days of preparation, removal and closure, Society member and restoration expert, Bob Zoni, worked with the crew and monitored the Society’s interests. Beecher and Bennette Funeral Home let Bob “borrow” electric power when it was needed. Bob Zoni’s participation was crucial to the restoration project and he has once again earned our heartfelt thanks for a job well done. J.T. Furry Construction Company owner, Bill Copeland, donated his equipment and time in demolishing the attached garage section

which was not part of the original structure. His son, Michael, was there moving dirt and debris, leveling paths and re-grading slopes to ease the barn's move.

We had continuous support from the Hamden Arts Council, its Coordinator Mimsie Coleman and its Chairman, Marvin Michalsen. Their encouragement and participation continued to move the project along. Since the relocation project began, Hamden's editorial writers, especially Brad Durrell of the *Hamden Journal* and *The Hamden Chronicle* has been extremely supportive as has been Rebecca Baker of *The New Haven Register*. Our Mayor Carl Amento and former Mayor Barbara DiNicola provided early support and continuous assistance in our efforts. Curt Leng, Mayor Amento's Administrative Assistant, served as point man. Al Savarese, Town Engineer; Roger O'Brien, Town Planner; Judy Kozak, Town Purchasing Officer gave advice, time and energy as did our Traffic Department and Parks and Recreation Department.

Our Legislative Council members in accepting the Rectory School Barn recognized the importance of preserving our local heritage. Council President Carol Noble along with Council Members Ann Altman and Pam Greene helped with advice and oversight as the project progressed. The entire Council's vision was instrumental in saving this community asset. The cooperation of the Hamden Housing Authority under Executive Director Hazelann Cook and Chairman William Hindinger was critical to moving the Rectory School Barn across their property.

The project also owes its success to Lori Shields of Fleet Bank, Hamden Historical Society members Sam Becker, Martha Becker and Bill Doheny, and, of course, the late Brian Poirier; the Hamden Rotary Club, Spring Glen Civic Association, Dunbar Civic Association, Press/Cuozzo, the New Haven Savings Bank and our other contributors as well.

THANK YOU ALL! In May of 2001, the orchestra did play, not a requiem, but an *Ode to Joy*!!

### **Reprint..Hamden Reminiscences**

Thank you members for responding; your words will appear in upcoming newsletters. Again... Want to put your memories into writing? We will accept personal perspectives concerning Hamden—memories of people, places or events, childhood or family—that you would be willing to share with our membership. We request that your submission be about 200 words. Send it to us at P.O. Box 06512, Hamden, CT

06518. We do reserve the right to edit for content and length. Thanks for remembering.

### ***Recycled Reminder***

We want to thank our members who signed on to the SNET fundraiser program; your Society received a check for your participation. For others who may be willing to help, SNET has pledged to the Historical Society five cents of every dollar you spend on long distance calls you make from home.

There is absolutely no extra *out of pocket charge to you*. When you make in-state, out-of-state, international and calling card calls, **SNET** will aggregate your calls and the calls of other folks who are joining you in this effort. Then, **SNET** will send us a check that equals 5% of the cost of all those long distance calls. To help us get the money from **SNET**, you need to call 1-800-635-7638 and tell them you want five cents of every dollar you spend on your long

distance calls to go to the Hamden Historical Society, Code #3062. Please join by calling soon.

### **REMEMBER**

The Giant Valley Dealers Antique Show for the benefit of the Society is scheduled for November 17-18. Mark your calendar for this event.

### **JD HOUSE SEASON CLEAN-UP**

Fog hugged the ground and storm clouds gathered; rain seemed ready to burst from the sky. The promise of a clear, bright day for our annual clean up at the Dickerman House and property was wishful thinking at 7AM that June 23<sup>rd</sup> morning.

How blessed is our Society? Arriving at the House at 8:15, I found Joe Pepe with Terri Deshefy-Longhi and her husband, John already at work in the garden. No rain yet. Soon Ginny Zufunft appeared and set to work with Betsy Gorman to finish cleaning the JD House interior which Lois Casey and Nancy Faughnan had begun earlier in the week. They washed windows, polished, dusted and scrubbed the floors making the house shine. By then, the sun was fighting to appear and Bill Doheny called to say that he, his son

Will and the tractor were on their way. Barbara Hogan arrived with the new curtains, which she donated, for our house's windows. With help from able assistant and designated "tall person" Ken Minkema, the new curtains were hung. They look so bright and clean. Thank you, Barbara.

Dark clouds came and went, but no rain as Bob Zoni pulled in to work. Bill and Will arrived and began to cut up the huge pine tree we had taken down last fall. The wood was loaded by Joe, Ken and Bob, and trucked away; then the brush pile was cut up and pushed back. The pile of dirt that claimed the back end of the parking lot as its home was finally spread and the knoll behind the memorial bench was cleared. Terri and John had to leave before she could get her annual tractor ride.

The "old" stone aged wall workers had no wall to construct this year, so they turned their talents to outhouse retrieval. The families of George and Bert Talmadge offered the Society an outhouse, c. 1950, that serviced the one room West Woods schoolhouse. This "two holer" needed to be transported from the Talmadge property, so the men went off on a road trip with the weather still in our favor. Loaded on to Will's trailer, the outhouse was transported to our property and placed at its new home on the knoll at the East Side of the house. It needs some fixing, a new coat of paint, and a floor and then it will be ready to serve as a storage shed for gardening equipment/tools.

The Society appreciates the help of the members who volunteered their time and energy for the clean up; it was a labor of love. A note of thanks to the weather as well. **THANKS, AL GORMAN**

## Historical Society Annual Meeting

In May, our annual meeting was held and we appreciate the members and guests who attended. We were also charmed and informed by our speaker, Professor Scott McLean. At the meeting, the Society offices were filled: Al Gorman, President; Bill Doheny, Vice-President; Sam Becker, Treasurer and Lois Casey, Recording Secretary. Congratulations!!

### *HOOORAY FOR LOUISE*

Hamden Library Director Louise Brundage recently retired from that position after thirty years of library service. A reception was held in her honor and among the many presentations it was announced that the Hamden Community Branch Library will be named after her. Louise started as a volunteer in the Wallingford Public Schools system and she still plans to continue volunteering in retirement. Louise is a long time member of our Society and serves as its Membership chair. **CONGRATULATIONS!!**

**NEWSLETTER**

THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 5512 - HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518