



# THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER FALL EDITION 2003

## WHO WE ARE

### Board of Directors

Al Gorman  
*President*

Bill Doheny  
*Vice-president*

Barbara Hogan  
*Recording Secretary*

Sam Becker  
*Treasurer*

Martha Becker  
*Historian*

### Committee Chairs

Louise Brundage

Lois Casey

Betsy Gorman

Stella Johnson

Ken Minkema

Joe Pepe

Virginia Zukunft

The above streamlined list does not do justice to the Board members who wear more than one hat serving on many committees, assuming a variety of roles and contributing in numerous ways, making our Society an active and responsible community organization.

Help us, help Hamden.

**IN THIS ISSUE:** Thank you to members, Dennis H. Harris House, Congratulations to All, Into the Past, Annual Giant Valley Association of Antiques Dealer Show, Hamden Historical Society Library, Wine and Cheese Celebration for members.

**A GREAT BIG THANK YOU** to all Society members who returned their dues in a timely fashion. A special note of appreciation to those of you who sent the Society an extra donation above your membership dues; fourteen of you donated a total of \$270. Our Treasurer is more than pleased since our insurance premium for the Jonathan Dickerman House increased 36% over last year.

### Dennis H. Harris House, c. 1881

This unique Victorian Gothic style house (*Hamden: Our Architectural Heritage*, p. 102) at 2022 Whitney Avenue was lost this summer in August, to the demolition by the owner. Having been empty for the last several years and neglected, it became a danger and the Town ordered it boarded up and the power cut off. Apparently there was no one able to step forward with an idea and the finance necessary to adapt it to commercial use. As a home, it did not sit in a neighborhood any longer; it had been isolated and forgotten. And now it is gone.



photographs courtesy of Al and Betsy Gorman

## Congratulations to All

This year marks the 211th birthday (or is it anniversary?) of the Jonathan Dickerman House! The Historical Society did not plan a party. It seems that as time passes we tend to celebrate major benchmarks, pausing to reflect at only the 25th or centennial or tercentennial and so forth. Yet, the 211 year old house was not neglected this year.

Part of the Society's mission is to care for the Dickerman House and open it for public visitations and education tours. In the Spring, Lois Casey and her team ushered hundreds of Hamden school children through as part of their study of local history. In June, our volunteer clean up crew descended upon the "old red house" to wash its floors and windows, dust and polish, and hang the new curtains. Outdoor activities included bush trimming, resetting the driveway entrance posts, drip-hose laying and gutter installation on the Cider Barn; all this to make ready for the first July weekend summer opening. Members of the Spring Glen Garden Club made a number of trips to tend the herb garden-replanting, pruning, fertilizing and installing new plant identification signs. Our property manager, Joe Pepe, visits regularly to inspect the house and water the gardens.

So maybe we did not have a cake with candles, but we did fulfill our responsibilities and worked to "dress up" our Jonathan Dickerman House for its proud Two Hundred and Eleventh Year.



The Inside Team: Lois Casey, Connie Whalen, Virginia Zukunft, Barbara Hogan (rear) and Betsy Gorman missing from photo



The Outside Team: Joe Pepe, Bob Zoni, Bill Doheny and Al Gorman

**The Hamden Historical Society Library** announces its hours for the year 2003-2004. The Library will open for the public on Tuesday 10-12, Thursday 1-4 and Sunday 1-3:30. Appointments can be scheduled. Please contact Joe Pepe at: [hhs/hamdenlibrary.org](http://hhs/hamdenlibrary.org) or [jsphpep@aol.com](mailto:jsphpep@aol.com)

## INTO THE PAST

Early this summer the owners of the Hamden Plaza announced the removal of the "Ghost Parking Lot". In response to the *New Haven Register's* "Sound Off" column about scrapping Hamden's "Ghost Parking Lot", nine residents wrote a variety of comments from "Good riddance" to "It is time for it to go". None of the comments were positive, although some writers expressed hopes that it would be replaced by flowers and plantings. Certainly not always a popular piece of local sculpture, it did continually cause controversy and debate to the end.

The proposed new buildings, one on each of do not require more parking needs. The Plaza owner and maintain the sculpture patient over the last couple efforts to save the "Ghost developed. Alas, they were remain empty as long as Plaza; when it expires, constructed along the



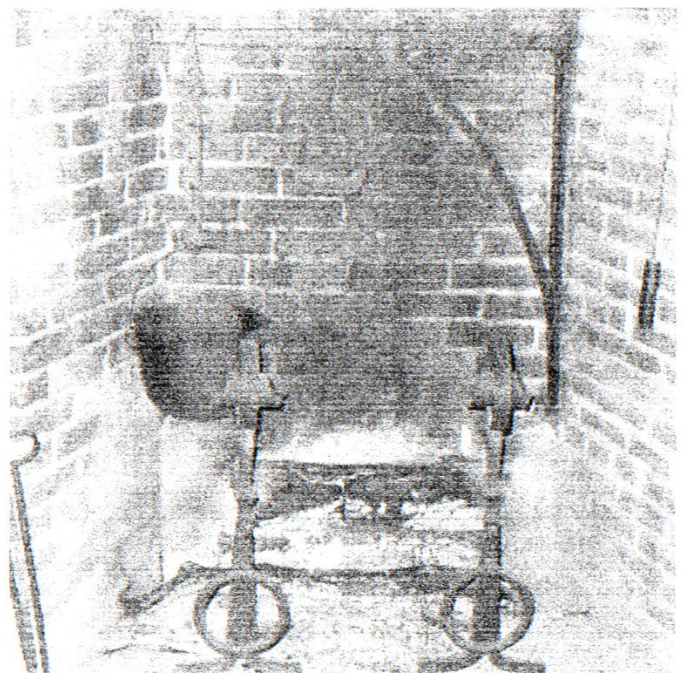
construction at the Plaza of two the Dixwell Avenue facing ends, than already exists for their simply does not want to care any longer. He had been very of years providing time, so that Parking Lot" could be unsuccessful. The space will Marshall's leases space at the another building could be Dixwell Avenue border.

Created by James Wines in 1978, the original 20 cars have deteriorated over the years exposing the rusted skeletons of the remaining fifteen. As a work of art, the site-specific outdoor sculpture made a statement concerning American culture. It gained notoriety in the art world illustrating how public art can be incorporated into a retail setting. The "Ghost Parking Lot" did not receive the acclaim locally that it did outside Hamden. Yet, it became a Hamden landmark for 25 years.

A curiosity to some, a reminder of America's relationship with their automobiles or just a series of asphalt lumps, the "Ghost Parking Lot" served to challenge our visual senses, raise our interests and spur our imaginations in the world around us.

You are invited  
to join members and friends  
of the Hamden Historical Society  
for wine and cheese

**Sunday, October 19**  
3:00-5:00 PM  
Jonathan Dickerman House Museum



# ***NEWSLETTER***

**THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**P.O. BOX 5512 HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518**

**SAVE THE DATE! PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDAR! PLAN TO ATTEND!**

## **Annual Giant Valley Association of Antiques Dealers Show**

**November 15 and 16: Doors open at 10:00 and 11:00 AM**

Volunteers will be needed to collect entrance fees at the entrance and to help staff in the kitchen. Call 288-0017. This is our only fund raiser and we ask for your support. This will be the 42nd year of the show that the Giant Valley Association of Antique Dealers arrange for the benefit of our Society. See you there.