



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

NOVEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History
492 Main St., Portland, CT 06480 Tel: 860-342-5455

www.PortlandHistSoc.com Email: PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com

Vol 41 No 3

Jingle and Mingle: 3rd Annual Festival of Wreaths

Plans are underway for our third annual Festival of Wreaths: "Jingle and Mingle!" on the weekend of December 6 and 7.

Thanksgiving is almost here and thoughts are turning to beautiful holiday decorations. Last year we raffled over 40 wreaths and we are hoping to raffle many festive and fun loving wreaths again this year. Participating is a wonderful way to shine the spotlight on your business, organization, family or club! If you would like to help us, please consider donating a decorated wreath — it's not too late.

On our website (www.PortlandHistSoc.com) and our Facebook page there is information about the Festival, and call Deb at 860-342-1927 or send us an email at PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com to register. Please register by Friday, November 28.



Wreaths may be dropped off at the carriage barn behind 329 Main Street on Thursday, December 4, from 4 - 7 p.m. or on Friday, December 5, from noon - 3 p.m. Help us make this year's Festival the biggest and most beautiful ever!

On Saturday and Sunday, December 6 and 7, come mingle with others over some holiday treats, wear your warmest holiday sweaters, share some holiday stories with acquaintances old and new and help us continue to build this new holiday tradition in Portland. What better way is there to get into the holiday spirit than to explore our display of wreaths, take some chances and hopefully win your favorite! Wreaths will range from traditionally decorated greens to more elaborate or whimsical creations. Come see the work of the crafty and artsy people of Portland.

Imaginative wreaths created for the 2013 Festival of Wreaths included a Barbie wreath (top) by Sarah Bennett Brdar, and a Grinch wreath (above) by Deb Ellsworth.

(Continued on page 3)

In loving memory of Historical Society members and supporters who passed away recently:

Marion Anderson
Joseph Bordonaro Sr.
Peter Bransfield

Gerald Binnington Sr.
Kathleen Brede
Perry Hale

Janice McCormick
Norman Hanson
Kenneth Schoell

We apologize if we have missed anyone and ask you to please contact us if we have not listed a loved one who was one of our supporters.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi all,

This has been a busy summer for the Society! The Ruth Callander House was named to the National Register of Historic Places. We are so proud to have this wonderful designation. Many thanks to Claire Frisbie, Chris Sullivan and Doris Sherrow-Heidenis for their work on the nomination process.

This summer we held an Ice Cream Social in June at the Portland Senior Center and enjoyed an evening of music and dance with the Victorian Quadrille Orchestra and dance troupe. The Van Beynum Awards were given to our long-serving Treasurer, Jim McCabe, and to the members of the Brownstone Quorum for their long-standing support of Portland history. Thanks to Regina Woltmann and her Program volunteers for making this happen.

We also had a special quilt donated to us by Bethia Kelsey Washburn and the Pelton, Kelsey, and Strickland families at Connecticut Open House Day in early June. The many visitors appreciated a talk on the history of the quilt by Bethia, meeting various members of the family, many of whom came from out of state, and sampling delicious family recipes made by our members. Thanks to the Exhibits Committee and volunteers for baking for this event and for their work on our summer exhibit which included a large genealogical chart of the Pelton-Kelsey-Strickland families!

In October, we had a display at the fair showing off information on the Ruth Callander House and the upcoming Festival of Wreaths. A wonderful Halloween Wreath by Deb Ellsworth was raffled and won by 3rd grader Sarah Kresser. Thanks to John Peterson, Elwin Guild, George Gilbert and Bob McDougall for their assistance with setup and breakdown of the exhibit. Thanks to all the volunteers who manned the booth in spite of the cold and rain!

The third graders of Gildersleeve School again provid-

ed us with their artistic renderings of Portland History Postcards, Precious Pieces of Portland, which were exhibited at our Sunday, November 2nd Open House. During the prior week, each class walked from Gildersleeve School to the Callander House and spent an hour participating in a history lesson and tour. Thanks to all our museum volunteers for making this happen!

On Sunday, November 16, we will celebrate the 300th birthday of the Ruth Callander House and its listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A presentation by Claire Frisbie will explain the National Register historic designation process, the history of this house, the people who lived in it and their place in Portland history, and interesting discoveries from the recent restoration work. The celebration will take place at the Waverly Center (formerly the Portland Senior Center) at 2 pm.

The year will conclude with our 3rd Annual Festival of Wreaths in Jim McCabe's carriage house behind 329 Main Street on Saturday, December 6th and Sunday, December 7th, from 12 - 4 p.m. Please consider donating a wreath and stopping by for refreshments at the raffle! We look forward to seeing you there and wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!!

Martha Lutecki



Sarah Kresser looks through her new Halloween wreath as her mother, Becky, holds it.

Festival of Wreaths *continued from page 1*

All proceeds from this event will be used to restore the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History and to fund educational projects for the community.

The Festival is in the carriage barn behind 329 Main Street (not at the Callander House) on Saturday, December 6 and Sunday, December 7 from noon to 4 p.m. both days. Winning names will be drawn at 4 p.m. Sunday before the start of Portland's Parade of Lights.



“Doggy Delights” wreath from the 2013 Festival of Wreaths made with dog treats and dog toys by Sarah Perruccio.

Ruth Callander House News



This photo of the Callander House shows the newly restored chimney with its blue-stone cap.

This fall our mason, Stan Bates, returned to complete repairs to the Callander House chimney. Much of the structure was 300 years old and many years of moisture coming down a cold chimney caused the bricks to disintegrate. As the single brick structure is not code for burning now, we elected to reconstruct the chimney historically with a flu liner for our furnace and appropriate protection at the top from future moisture. Stan deconstructed the old chimney down to a stable base just below the attic floor, then rebuilt it with new common brick to best match the old structure. He then sealed the unused flues and built piers topped with a blue-stone cap. We are very pleased to have a safe and secure structure, and functional flue for our furnace with the coming heating season.

Birthday and National Register Celebration for the Callander House

The Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History (also known as the Nathaniel White House) is celebrating its 300th birthday (built circa 1714) this year. The Society is pleased to announce that the house was finally listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation, after an 18-month long nomination process.

In recognition of these milestones, the Portland Historical Society invites all interested to join with Society members at a program that will explain the National Register historic designation process, the history of this house, the people who lived in it and their place in Portland history, and interesting discoveries from the recent restoration work. The presentation will be at the Waverly Center (formerly Portland Senior Center on Waverly Avenue) on Sunday, November 16th, at 2 pm. Please join us for some Portland History Trivia, cake and ice cream, desserts, and visiting with friends!

Precious Pieces of Portland

Each year, volunteers from the Portland Historical Society work with the teachers of the third graders of Portland at Gildersleeve School, to increase the students' understanding of the history of the town of Portland. The students visit the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History for a guided interactive tour, and create a drawing and short essay about the item or place in Portland that they feel is the most important historically. Their artwork is based on several bus tours of the town where they are shown many historic places and a walking tour of the Meshomasic Forest and the reservoir led by John LeShane.

The artwork the students create - this year they represent postcards - is displayed at the museum alongside the historical displays that they view during their visit. Enlarged historical postcards are shown alongside their art. It is great fun for the students to identify their friends' and their own artwork as they learn more about related Portland history. During our November Open House, they enjoy bringing family and friends to view their work.

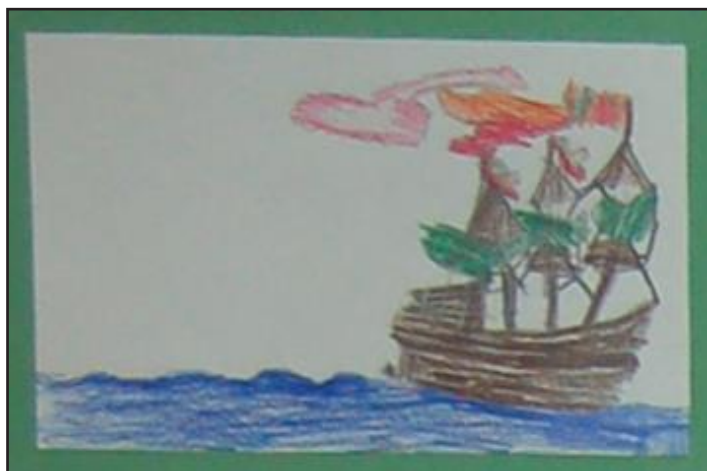
Prior to display, the artwork is judged by a panel of representatives from the Gildersleeve School and the Historical Society. The best combined artwork and essay from each class is chosen, and those are then awarded ribbons, 1st to 3rd place and 2 Honorable Mentions. The 1st to 3rd place winners receive a gift card. All the students receive a certificate of participation and token gifts.

During the class visits to the museum, we look at Portland at 4 different points in time - 350, 250, 150 and 50 years ago. Comparisons are made of what the area looked like, who was living here and the population numbers. Many enlarged photos are used to show earlier times and artifacts from key Portland activities such as quarries, tobacco farming and shipbuilding, are displayed and discussed. As students enter, they are handed several words on boards, which are answers to questions discussed. Everyone has an opportunity to participate throughout the discussion by finding the place where their words fit.

Second place winner Erin Spencer drew the Meshomasic Pest House (right). This was a building in the forest where people would stay for a week or two while they were innoculated with small pox to create immunity to the disease.



Precious Pieces of Portland Contest winners (left to right): Honorable Mentions: Aleksandra Connolly and Lillian Tabellone; Erin Spencer (Second Place), Raven Mergel (First Place), and Dorothy Riley (Third Place).



The above artwork is by Raven Mergel, our first place winner this year. He wrote: "This is the Gildersleeve Shipbuilding. In the 19th century, Sylvester Gildersleeve combined several yards to establish S. Gildersleeve & Sons. From 1821-1932 the Gildersleeves built and launched 358 vessels. The museum displays tools, photographs and record books from the shipyard."



Thank you to all

who have supported the Portland Historical Society and Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History by purchasing memberships and products, and making extra donations.

Please consider renewing memberships and making donations now to allow us to continue our mission. Your membership dollars and other donations support the Portland Historical Society's ability to collect and house artifacts and information with Portland significance, to preserve the collection and our building, and to share Portland history with the public.

Over the next year, we will be planning for the town's 175th anniversary in 2016. The Ruth Callander House will continue its makeover with a complete exterior painting. Our collections require significant work to improve housing for preservation, and organization to allow research and exhibitions. At present, our all-volunteer staffing and the size of our building create severe limitations on our ability to pursue our mission of collecting, sharing and preserving Portland history. Our technological needs are great - upgrades to computers, websites, software, are all necessary to move our work forward.

A membership envelope is included in this newsletter. Memberships run Jan 1 - Dec 31. In addition, you now have the option to receive your newsletter electronically. Please check the box beside your choice.

*With much appreciation for your continued support,
Claire Frisbie
Membership chair
860-335-8581*



William J. Van Beynum Awards were presented at the June Ice Cream Social by Bob McDougall, Trustees Chair, to Brownstone Quorum members (above) and James McCabe, Society Treasurer.

HISTORY NOTES by Doris Sherrow-Heidenis

When he was born in 1878, my grandfather was named Charles Edward Darling. About the time he graduated from high school, he had his name changed to “Charles Sherman Darling.” For years, I assumed this had something to do with America’s post-Civil War admiration for Gen. William Tecumsah Sherman.

It turns out that Charles - or “Chick” as he was known - was perpetrating the fad of the late 1800s and early 1900s, using his MOTHER’S MAIDEN NAME FOR HIS OWN MIDDLE NAME! His father Marshall Darling had married Emily Sherman.

In 1909, Charles Sherman Darling married Sarah Dyer, and the couple had two sons. In accordance with this tradition of using the mother’s maiden name for the baby’s middle name, my 1910 uncle was named Edward Dyer Darling, and my 1913 father, Daniel Dyer Darling.

Does anyone else know anything about this tradition?

Editor’s note: Answers and comments to Doris may be sent by email to PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com or by mail to: PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480.



Do you recognize anyone in this photo? This was found recently in the house of the late Perry Hale on Main St. These young students appear to be outside Central School in possibly the late 1930s. The boy in the center of the back row has been identified as Tom Ellsworth. Please let us know if you can tell us any other identifications or the year of the photo. Send comments by email to PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com or by mail to: PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480.

CALLANDER HOUSE CUPBOARD

Portland Gifts now available for the Holidays!

Your purchases support Society projects. Supplies are limited so contact us soon.



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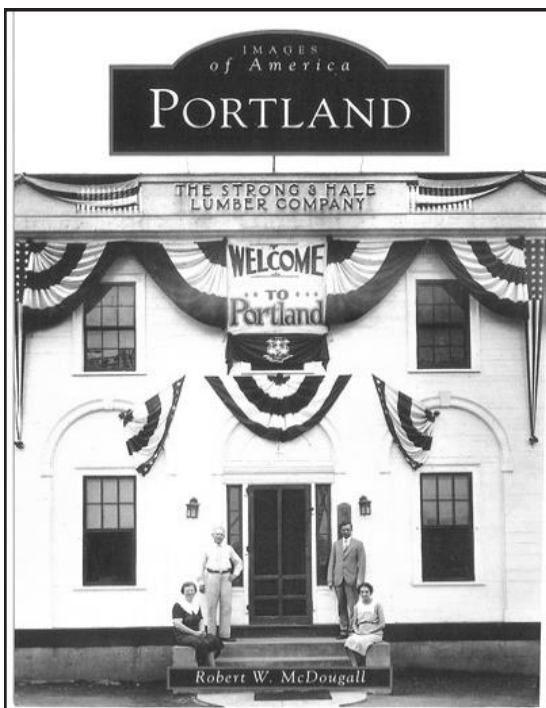
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Call 860-342-1927 to order or mail to: Portland Historical Society, PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

CALENDAR . . .

Nov. 16 - Celebration of 300th Birthday and National Register Listing of Ruth Callander House
 - Program and Party at Waverly Center (former Senior Center) at 2 p.m.

Dec. 4 & 5 - Drop off wreaths for Festival of Wreaths - at the carriage barn behind 329 Main Street on Thursday, 4 - 7 p.m. or on Friday, 12 - 3 p.m.

Dec. 6 & 7 - Festival of Wreaths - at the carriage barn behind 329 Main Street from 12 to 4 p.m. Sat. & Sun.

Dec. 14, 21, 28 and Jan. 4 - The Wonders of Toyland Before Electronics!
 Holdiay Exhibit at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History - open 2-4 p.m.



Society members join in the dancing at June's Ice Cream Social.

Watch Rivereast News Bulletin for announcements of future programs and membership meetings.

NEWSLETTER - *Claire Frisbie, 11-12-14, 860-335-8581*

November 2014 Newsletter!

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2014 SOCIETY OFFICERS

FESTIVAL OF WREATHS - DEC 6 & 7

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