



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

SUMMER 2009 NEWSLETTER

Ruth Callander House Museum, 492 Main St., Portland, CT., 06480, Tel: 860-342-5455
www.PortlandHistSoc.Org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER . . .

Spring has been busy here in Portland. The **Betty Keser Scott Garden** is in full bloom and all around town the flowering plants have been wonderful this year.

In April, Susanne Anderson and a committee of volunteers put on a new event for the Society, the **Spring Tea and Vintage Jewelry Sale**. It was a lovely afternoon at the St. Clement's Castle in Portland with an interesting program on hats by Barbara Cubanski. We all came away satiated with tea and sweets, thrilled with jewelry and gift purchases, and filled with the sights and sounds of beautifully attired women and hats. Not only was it a great afternoon, but it turned out to be another one of Sue's fund raising successes for the Society's Museum and Programs.

May brought the **13th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale** another successful event thanks to Eleanor and Pat Crowther and their committee of volunteers. 158 tag sales were held all over Portland including 8 tag salers at the Hemlock Grange. People filled the streets to look and buy a huge assortment of items. It seems almost anything you are looking for can now be found at a tag sale somewhere!

Chris Sullivan and her **Historic Sites Committee** continue to work on *saving the Erastus Brainerd Jr. House, Hart/Jarvis House and John Sage House from demolition*. The houses are located on the former Elmcrest Hospital site at the intersection of Marlborough and Main Streets in downtown Portland. Thanks to the assistance of many people, we are collecting signatures on petitions, writing letters to town officials and letters to editors, and informing as many people as possible about the issues at stake. ***The Planning and Zoning Hearing has been continued to July 9*** when we hope to have a large group of townspeople present to support saving these houses.

Joyce Vacca (right), her daughter, Heather Voccola (left) and granddaughters, Rebecca and Alyssa, were perfectly dressed at April's Spring Tea.



Summertime will bring a new exhibit at the **Ruth Callander Museum of Portland History**. The Farm exhibit is being catalogued for inventory and will be available in binders for future visitors. Susanne Anderson is putting together a committee that will be creating a Farm Book from the popular exhibit information. Phyllis Frisbie and her Exhibit committee are working on **19th and early 20th Century Portland**, *an exhibit covering industry, family, and daily life of the town.*

Regina Woltmann continues to turn out excellent **Programs for Society Membership Meetings**. May's meeting brought Steve Cryan who held our attention an extra hour with a slide show on Steamboats, Tugboats and Trains between New York and the Connecticut River.

For our **June program**, our annual Picnic will have a new format. The **Members Appreciation Picnic** will be indoors with food provided and the Middletuners, Middletown's Senior Chorus, will perform. It promises to be a great night, don't miss it!

Thank you to all our terrific volunteers who make all this possible. Have a great summer!

Claire Frisbie - 860-335-8581

NOTES . . .

Historic Houses to be Demolished

We continue to work to save the historic houses threatened by the Portland Town Place development. These houses have been toured by a dozen architectural, structural and historical experts from around Connecticut including David Bahlman, director of the Historic Preservation and Museum Division of the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism, and Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director of the CT Trust for Historic Preservation. The experts all agree that the houses are structurally sound, architecturally and historically important, and well-suited for rehabilitation and reuse. Funding is available to assist developers to preserve nationally registered historic structures. The demolition of these structures would cost a significant amount that will be saved if these buildings are reused. The rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures has been found to be less expensive or equal in cost to building new structures in many instances. Developments that use historic buildings have been shown to be more successful because customers prefer the feel of places that fit within their communities and retain local character. The Society is circulating a petition to save the Brainerd House, Hart/Jarvis House and Sage House. Email PortlandHistSoc@yahoo.com or call 860-335-8581 to get petition. Petitions must be in to Society, PO Box 98, by July 8. Please attend the hearing July 9.



Second floor office at Erastus Brainerd Jr. House shows one of the many marble fireplaces and a view of the detailed wooden floors.

Members Appreciation Picnic

On June 23, all are invited to the Portland Senior Center for a picnic buffet, provided by the Society. "An Evening of Music and Song" will be presented by the Middletuners, Middletown's Senior Chorus. Their program includes mid-nineteenth through mid-twentieth century songs with accompaniment. Picnic begins at 6 pm, program at 7 pm, dessert will follow. There is no need to bring anything with you, just come out for a good time.

Memorable Spring Tea!

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the members and friends of the Portland Historical Society who attended and helped to make our Spring Tea and Vintage Jewelry Sale fundraiser a success and a memorable afternoon. With your overwhelming support, we raised over \$4,500 for the Society!

Special thanks to our guest speaker, Barbara Cubanski, for presenting her informative hat program and to Father Edward Doherty and the St. Clements Foundation for the use of their beautiful facility and beverage donations. Thanks, also, to the following businesses for their generous donations: Angela's Fine Jewelry, Barnes House of Flowers, Bella Victoria, LLC, Cavalieries Bakery, Gifts From The Heart, K' n K Consignment, Mary Kay Products by Lorraine Perrotti, Red Door Boutique, Shaws Supermarket of East Hampton, Sweet Memories Bakery, and Tri-Town Foods of Portland.

I would also like to thank all of the Society members who donated jewelry and tea cups as well as the following individuals who assisted in many ways with the event: Elaine Carella, Barbara Carroll, Linda Cunningham, Marie DeGraff, Mary Ann Dolan, Shannon Dolan, Judi Elder, Debbie Ellsworth, Ruth Freeburg, Jean Kelsey, Marie Keser, Martha Lutecki, Jane Nash, Kathryn Paredez, Sara Perruccio, Judy Pogmore, Chris Sullivan, and Regina Woltmann.

All proceeds from this fundraiser will be used to support the educational programs of the Portland Historical Society, Inc. and the operation of the Society's Museum.

Thank you,

Sue Anderson, Chairperson of Ways & Means

HISTORY. . . From Doris Sherrow-Heidenis

I have read quite a few petitions from the 18th century, and I would give this one a C-. It's not as well phrased as such things usually are, but then again, these are a bunch of guys from a small neighborhood, who seem to have had no one with "extra education" to fill their gaps! However, they got their requested street!

The 1754 Petition for Indian Hill Avenue

[Rated "X-Sp" for egregious spelling and grammar. Not to be shown to children under 16! I have tried to use minimal "sic's."]

To the Town of Middletown at there annul [*their annual*] meeting, held by adjournment on Monday the 16th Day of this Instant December 1754—

The memorial of us the subscribers Humbly shewing that there is grate need of a highway from the neck Street against Mr. Schallonix [*Abraham Schellenx lived at 643 Main Street*] to the grate River by Samson Hows [*Samson Howe's, in the vicinity of Petzold's Marina*] for these Reasons following.

1 There being no way for us in the Street to git [*sic*] to the River but by trespassing upon our neighbors from Mr. Boushs yard to the upper end of the Street [*George Bush's shipyard was where the Brownstone Quarry now is.*]

2 at said Hows is the Place where we want to carry our lumber for the vessels to carry off [*i.e. that sheltered bend in the Connecticut River*]

3 there is the Place where vessels lie to load & unload and where there is a were house [*warehouse*] Kept which cause a grate deal of traveling in that Place:

4 there is no water for creators [*creatures*] to come at in the Street toward the upper End: which illconvenance might be helpt by an open Highway in the afforsaid Place for these and many more Reasons that might be given we Humbly Pray the town would Plese [*sic*] to give us liberty to by [*buy*] said Highway where Mr. Frary by our Desire hath Laid it out as being the most covenant [*sic*] Place for the Publick: which if you in your wisdom shall think Best to do your Memorialist shall as in Duty Bound Ever Pray,

Subscribers—

Samson Howe [*apparent author*]

James Witon [*lived in the vicinity of 41 Indian Hill Avenue*]

Job Bates [*built & lived at 3 Indian Hill Avenue*]

David Sage [*a little ways up Bartlett Street on the north side of the street*]

George Ranney [*"100" Indian Hill Avenue, beyond # 76; burned down in 1910*]

John Savage [*601 Main Street, the earlier version, not the pink Italianate!*]

Benoni Brown [*112 Bartlett Street?*]

Jer: Goodrich [*"Jeremiah"—589 Main Street*]

Isaac Waterman [*112 Bartlett Street? Or moved from there to elsewhere*]

Selections from the CALLANDER HOUSE CUPBOARD

Portland Scenes -- Tile \$12 -- Mug \$9.50
Mahogany Penholder with Pen.....\$12
Images of Portland by Bob McDougall.....\$20
Portland Recipes and Reflections.....\$8
Antique Pictures Magnets \$2 ea, 3/\$5, set 20/\$30
Portland Scenes Notepad (50 pgs., 5 scenes) 2/\$3
Portland Scenes Tea Towel\$5
Portland Scenes/Floral Notecards \$3, 2/\$5, 5/\$10

NEW - Eight Antique Photo (circa 1900) Postcards:
1 Main Street toward River (pre 1922), 2 Main Street looking West (1900), 3 Soldiers Monument (post 1897), 4 Trinity Cemetery Fountain (1891), 5 Engine House #1 (1895), 6 Town Hall & Buck Library (1900), 7 Trinity Church (1890), 8 Nathaniel White House (1912) \$.75 ea or 3 for \$1
Great for Class Reunion favors or announcements

Please include \$2 shipping per \$10 of order
Your purchases support Society projects
Call 860-342-0433 to order or mail to: Portland Historical
Society, PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

CALENDAR

All programs are held at the Portland Library,
Mary Flood Room, at 7:30 pm., unless otherwise indicated.

**June 23 - Membership Appreciation Picnic with
"An Evening of Music and Song"**
by the *Middletuners* - Senior Center - 6 pm

July 5 - Museum Closed for holiday
- open by appointment, call 860-342-0303

July 9 - PLANNING & ZONING HEARING - 7 pm
Brownstone Intermediate School

August 2 - NEW - Portland Exhibit - Museum open 2-4 pm

September 6 - Portland Exhibit - Museum open 2-4 pm

September 12 - Brownstone Festival and Family Day
- Town Green and Riverfront Park

**September 22 - "The Conservation of Buildings
Constructed with Portland Brownstone"**
by Jim Norden, civil engineer



*Erastus Brainerd Jr. House second
floor stair to 3rd floor and cupola.*

NEWSLETTER - *Phyllis, Bill and Claire Frisbie, 6-12-09*

Newsletter!

Eugene Sullivan
James Rau
Deborah Ellsworth

DIRECTORS

President - Claire Frisbie
1st Vice President - Susanne Anderson
2nd Vice President - Martha Luteci
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2009

SOCIETY OFFICERS

SAVE THE HISTORIC PORTLAND HOUSES
SIGN THE PETITION, ATTEND HEARING JULY 9

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