



# PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

## WINTER 2010 NEWSLETTER

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

### **ANNUAL REPORT - C.Frisbie, Past-President**

Happy Winter! We capped off a busy 2009 with our **Annual Meeting** in January of this year.

**WILLIAM VAN BEYNUM AWARDS:** The meeting began with presentations of our first annual awards. (See pg. 4 for additional article)

**Community Involvement:** *Ben Srb* was commended for his donation of time, energy, ingenuity, equipment and the volunteering of his employees to move the Corn Crib donated by the Mattabesock Audubon Society to its new position behind the Ruth Callander House.

**Society Volunteers:** Recognized were *Ruth Freeburg, Bill Frisbie, Phyllis Frisbie and Claire Frisbie*. *Ruth Freeburg*, who has just stepped down after spending 17 years as our Executive Board Secretary, has also been our interface with the Brownstone Quorum and Hemlock Grange, and an important part of the House Committee, Tag Sale, Spring Tea and numerous other Society projects, along with work at the Society's museum. *Bill Frisbie* has been Membership Chair, along with key roles in the Tag Sale, Exhibits, Newsletter and many other projects, a member of the House Committee and docent at the Society's museum. *Phyllis Frisbie* has been Exhibit Chair and designer, Editor of the Society's Newsletter, Publicity Chair, member of the Tag Sale and House Committees, and docent at the Society's museum.

**CIVIL WAR VETERANS:** *Bill Willinsky of Veterans Affairs* has collected the names of 198 Portland Veterans of the Civil War and would like suggestions as to how they should be honored in town, now that veterans of most other wars are commemorated. There will be a meeting of Veterans Affairs at the American Legion Hall on February 16. All with thoughts on this are welcome to attend or contact *Bill Willinsky* directly.

**ORAL NARRATIVES DONATED:** Three Wesleyan students, *Michelle Garcia, Morgan Hamill, Sarah Tracy-Wanck*, represented *Professor Indira Karamcheti* and the students of *ENGL247: Oral Histories and the Port-*



*On August 21, 2009, Ben Srb, Scott Harmon and Primary Landscaping moved this Corn Crib from the Hedstrom-Carlson Farm to the Ruth Callander House.*

*land Brownstone Quarries*, as they presented, to the Society, a set of seven CD's containing the Oral Narratives produced by the class during interviews of nine Portland residents about the quarries: their impact on the town, their future, the way the town's identity has been shaped by their presence, and other topics. Residents interviewed were *Alison Guinness, Kristof Henning, Joe Siefertman, Jack Dillon, Anna Fairbank, Bob McDougall, Jeanne Dilworth, Mike Meehan and Bill Barrows*. Students created oral narratives for presentation, often with photographic accompaniment. This valuable historic information now becomes part of the material preserved in the museum's archives.

**RUTH CALLANDER HOUSE MUSEUM OF PORTLAND HISTORY:** It was another busy acquisitions year with over 1200 items added to our inventory list. In 19 openings, the Museum received 246 visitors during 2009. In addition, Society volunteers made 423 visits on 156 days to work at the Museum. **Exhibits:** *Sue Anderson's* terrific Farms exhibit wrapped up half way through the year and the Exhibit Committee has created an overview on 1800's Portland including artifacts and photographs from the brownstone quarries, local industries, businesses and business men, and households of the era, along with the Portland Origins and Minerals collections.

2010 MEMBERSHIP ENVELOPE ENCLOSED



*Ruth Freeburg, Phyllis Frisbie & Ben Srb received William Van Beynum Awards. William & Claire Frisbie are not pictured.*

## **ANNUAL REPORT** (continued from pg 1)

**HISTORIC SITES:** Our attempt to save the buildings on the old Elmcrest property was unsuccessful but we attracted enough attention to cause the Portland Planning and Zoning Commission to pass a new regulation for *Adaptive Reuse of specific Historic properties* in the future; and to involve the Portland Historical Society in the process of future review.

**PROGRAMS:** *Regina Woltmann* has managed to fill another year with interesting and informative historic programs, and has another year on tap. See the back of this newsletter for upcoming events. If anyone has information on or interest in specific programs, please contact Regina at [portlandhistsoc@yahoo.com](mailto:portlandhistsoc@yahoo.com).

**RUTH CALLANDER HOUSE:** Maintaining our 1715 structure is demanding. *Pat Crowther* has built a new bulkhead and done much scraping and repainting to keep the clapboards covered, along with many other maintenance tasks. *Bob McDougall* has devoted hours to the renovation of the Corn Crib since its arrival in June, along with other tasks inside and outside the museum. Other members of the Committee can often be seen working in the yard of the museum, seeing to its upkeep.

**TAG SALE COMMITTEE:** Eleanor Crowther and her Committee arranged another successful Town-Wide Tag Sale, a staple event of our yearly funding and important event on the town calendar.

**WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE:** *Susanne Anderson* and her Committee have invented interesting, attractive and informative fundraising projects. New this year was the *Spring Tea, Hat Program and Vintage Jewelry Sale* along with a number of *new products* that can be seen on our *Callander Cupboard page*. The *Portland Farms Exhibit* continued to expand and was the subject of the *2010 Heritage Calendar*. We look forward to the *Farms Book* planned for the coming year, and in June of 2010, the *Secret Garden Tour* promises to be another fascinating new event.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** To begin the transition process to our new Society structure as stated in our bylaws, initial members for the Board of Trustees were nominated and elected. Trustees will provide long term planning and oversight for the Society. Elected were *Bob McDougall, Chris Sullivan and Regina Woltmann*.

**ANNUAL NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD:** New officers are – *President: Susanne Anderson, First Vice President: Deborah Ellsworth, Second Vice President: Martha Lutecki, Treasurer: James McCabe, Recording Secretary: Linda Cunningham, Corresponding Secretary: Joanne Luppi, Director (3 years): Ruth Freeburg, Director (one year - remainder of Jim Rau's term) George Gilbert. Gene Sullivan* continues his term as Director.

**PORTLAND PROGRAM:** *Bob McDougall* concluded the Annual Meeting with an interesting and informative “12 Months Of Portland In 12 Minutes!” With his



*Past-president Claire Frisbie passed the gavel to newly elected President Susanne Anderson.*

camera constantly at hand, he managed to capture a great sampling of the interesting events that happened around Portland during 2009.

As I leave the post of President, I would like to *thank all the great volunteers* who make the Society work possible, and keep the Society and Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History alive and functioning. Most of all I would like to *thank the members of the Board of Directors and Committee Chairs* who have provided great assistance and support to me throughout this year – *Susanne Anderson, Martha Lutecki, Jim McCabe, Ruth Freeburg, Linda Cunningham, Gene Sullivan, Deborah Ellsworth, Jim Rau, Chris Sullivan, Bob McDougall, Regina Woltmann, Eleanor Crowther and Pat Crowther*. Best wishes to the new board for a great year, and welcome to our new board members, *Joanne and George*.

- Claire -

## NOTES . . .

### Historic Gas Lamp - Bob McDougall, Museum Director

We received an email inquiry about the derivation of the gas lamp pictured below, which was once a working fixture on Second Avenue, New York. It is a heavy steel casting with the marking "Heath and Smith, Portland, Conn." The History of Middlesex county 1635-1885 by J. H. Beers & Co states, "United States Stamping Company...The business was formerly conducted by the HEATH and SMITH Manufacturing Company, which was organized in 1869. Men of Progress Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Leaders in Business and Professional Life in and of the State of Connecticut, 1898 provides this glimmer into the history of the company, "HALL, John Henry, President of the Brainerd, Shaler & Hall Quarry Company, of Portland and Vice-President and Manager of Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing, of Hartford, was born in Portland, Connecticut, March 24, 1849... In 1870 he became one of the incorporators of the Heath & Smith Manufacturing Company, of Portland, which proved a failure. In 1877 he purchased a majority interest in the Pickering Governor under the style of T. R. Pickering & Company, which business in 1888 was incorporated as the Pickering Governor Company."



*Left - Heath & Smith gas lamp (converted to electricity)  
Right - closeup of "Portland, Conn" on frame of lamp*

## 2010 Membership Dues

### Membership dues support:

Artifact documentation,  
preservation, and storage  
Museum maintenance, rehabilitation  
Exhibition materials, cases  
Monthly historical programs  
Historical books and projects  
Historic Sites mapping, protection

**Please use the enclosed envelope** to send your 2010 Dues in now: Individual \$10, Family \$20, Lifetime \$250. Mail to:  
Portland Historical Society,  
PO Box 98,  
Portland, CT 06480

### Wish List - Society Board Members

Society Board members have compiled a Wish List of items that would be useful to the Society's and Museum's daily function, and allow us to provide improved historic resources to the public. These are some of the items beyond usual operating expenses that your dues and donations could support.

- Voice mail system
- VCR/DVD player
- Internet capability
- Wireless Router
- Color Printer
- New vacuum cleaner
- Inventory software
- Publisher/design software
- Voice recorder
- Canopy tent
- Lightweight folding banquet tables
- Climate controlled storage area
- HVAC system for Museum
- Computer images of all items in collection
- Paid staff to increase Museum availability
- Increased collection storage
- Membership software

### Secret Garden Tour of Portland - Sue Anderson, Ways and Means Chair

Plans are underway by the Historical Society for a garden tour fundraiser. The self-guided tour, **Portland's Secret Gardens**, will be held on June 12, 2010. The tour will showcase at least eight private gardens in Portland including the Betty Keser Scott Garden at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History. The tour will also include light refreshments, the sale of houseplants, birdfeeders, birdhouses, along with a boutique of other garden gift items. The committee is looking for donations of teacups and houseplants, crafters to decorate birdhouses, as well as volunteers to help on the day of the tour. Anyone interested in helping in any of these ways, please call Sue at 860-342-0433. Funds raised from the garden tour will benefit the programs and the operation of the Society's Museum.

# NOTES continued . . .

| Portland Historical Society Treasurer's report |             |           |            |
|--|-------------|-----------|------------|
|  | 1/1/2009 to |           |            |
|  | 12/31/2009  | 2010      |            |
| Category Description                           | Actual      | Budget    | Difference |
| <b>Books</b>                                   |             |           |            |
| Book   | 180         | 200       | 20         |
| Coloring Books Sales                           | 24.5        | 100       | 75.5       |
| Cook Books                                     | 192         | 200       | 8          |
| Farm Books                                     | 0           | 3,000.00  | 3000       |
| Image Books                                    | 60          | 100       | 40         |
| Ltrs-Harry                                     | 25          | 100       | 75         |
| St Clements Book                               | 85          | 100       | 15         |
| postage-book                                   | 0           | -4.8      | -4.8       |
| printing-Books                                 | 0           | -3,000.00 | -3000      |
| TOTAL Books                                    | 566.5       | 795.20    | 228.7      |
|  |             |           | 0          |
| <b>Calendar Sales</b>                          |             |           |            |
| Calendar Sales                                 | 1,890.00    | 1,750.00  | -140       |
| postage-Cal                                    | -62.19      | -60       | 2.19       |
| printing-cal                                   | -1,250.00   | -1,250.00 | 0          |
| TOTAL Calendar Sales                           | 577.81      | 440.00    | -137.81    |
|  |             |           | 0          |
| <b>Callander House</b>                         |             |           |            |
| Interest Inc                                   | 0.3         | 1         | 0.7        |
| Memorials                                      | 70          | 1,000.00  | 930        |
| _DivInc  | 5,472.21    | 4,500.00  | -972.21    |
| _LT CapGnDst                                   | 0           | 2,000.00  | 2000       |
| _ST CapGnDst                                   | 135.52      | 200       | 64.48      |
| House Maintenance                              | -128.34     | -6,500.00 | -6371.66   |
| Insurance                                      | -4,483.00   | -2,880.00 | 1603       |
| Landscaping                                    | -1,350.00   | -1100     | 250        |
| Security                                       | -240        | -240      | 0          |
| Utilities                                      |             |           | 0          |
| Gas & Electric                                 | -747.01     | -800      | -52.99     |
| Heating Oil                                    | -2,592.78   | -2,500.00 | 92.78      |
| Telephone                                      | -228.42     | -200      | 28.42      |
| Water  | -587.76     | -150      | 437.76     |
| TOTAL Utilities                                | -4,155.97   | -3,650.00 | 505.97     |
| TOTAL Callander House                          | -4,679.28   | -6,669.00 | -1989.72   |
|  |             |           | 0          |
| <b>General Operations</b>                      |             |           |            |
| Donation                                       | 3,132.11    | 500       | -2632.11   |
| Dues   | 2,350.00    | 2,500.00  | 150        |
| Bank Charge                                    | -25         | -50       | -25        |
| Dues and Subscriptions                         | -35         | -35       | 0          |
| Licenses and Permits                           | 0           | -75       | -75        |
| Misc-gen                                       | -120        | -300      | -180       |
| News Letters                                   | -482        | -1,500.00 | -1018      |
| Portland Fair Booth                            | 0           | 0         | 0          |
| Postage-Gen                                    | -455.59     | -700      | -244.41    |
| Printing-Gen                                   | -220        | 0         | 220        |
| Programs                                       | -1,169.40   | -1,000.00 | 169.4      |
| Rent   | -100        | -200      | -100       |
| TOTAL General Operations                       | 2,875.12    | -860.00   | -3735.12   |
|  |             |           | 0          |
| <b>Museum</b>                                  |             |           |            |
| Misc-mus                                       | -1555.15    | -1,000.00 | 555.15     |
| TOTAL Museum                                   | -1555.15    | -1,000.00 | 555.15     |
|  |             |           | 0          |
| <b>Products</b>                                |             |           |            |
| Misc Product Sales                             | 0           | 0         | 0          |
| Products-Misc                                  | 691.02      | 500       | -191.02    |
| Tea 2009/ Hidden Garden 2010                   | 4,836.50    | 1500      | -3336.5    |
| Misc-prod                                      | -62         | -100      | -38        |
| Tea/Hidden Garden Exp                          | -501.1      | -500      | 1.1        |
| TOTAL Products                                 | 4,964.42    | 1400      | -3564.42   |
|  |             |           | 0          |
| <b>Tag sale</b>                                |             |           |            |
| TOTAL Tag sale                                 | 5,602.94    | 5,500.00  | -102.94    |
| OVERALL TOTAL                                  | 8,352.36    | -393.80   | -8746.16   |
|  |             |           | 0          |
| Total income                                   | 24,747.10   | 23,751.00 | -996.1     |

## 2010 Programs - Regina Woltmann - Program Chair

We would like to thank our many talented members who have so kindly volunteered and presented interesting historical programs over the years. If anyone would like to do a program for us or can suggest a program, we would be most appreciative.

**February 23** - Portland Library, 7:30 pm - *Oscar Hedstrom and the Indian Motorcycle by George Gilbert*. George Gilbert has been a motorcycle enthusiast since the late 1960's. Portland resident, Oscar Hedstrom, came up in conversations with other motorcycle enthusiasts. Hedstrom's claim to fame was that he invented the Indian Motorcycle. George continued cycling while living on Gospel Lane in Portland and raising his family. George then had the opportunity to purchase land that was once owned by Oscar Hedstrom. Purchasing the property coupled with his ownership of an Indian Motorcycle spurred him to do more research on Mr. Hedstrom's fascinating life.

**March 23** - Senior Center, 7:30 pm - *Stories in Stone by Jelle deBoer, Ph.D.* Dr. deBoer, Professor of Earth Science emeritus at Wesleyan University, will present information from his new book, *Stories in Stone*, which describes how early settlers discovered and exploited Connecticut's natural resources.

## Town-Wide Tag Sale Meeting - Eleanor Crowther

The Town-Wide Tag Sale Committee will meet **February 16 at 7:30 pm** at the Ruth Callander House, 492 Main Street. All are welcome, fresh inspiration and energy needed!

## William J. Van Beynum Award - Awards Committee

As a volunteer-driven organization, The Portland Historical Society, Inc. depends on the support of many in order to succeed. Therefore, we feel it is very important to recognize and value contributions made by our volunteers. In that spirit, the **William J. Van Beynum Award** was created in 2009 as a way to formally thank our members and others for their outstanding contributions of time, talent, or service to the Society's mission to preserve and protect the history of Portland. This award was named to honor the late William J. Van Beynum, a Portland resident, who tirelessly volunteered his time to research, promote, and document the history of Portland. His keen interest in historic preservation has inspired many to continue his work.

At the Society's Annual Meeting held in January 2010, recipients of the first Van Beynum Awards were: **Ruth Freeburg, Claire Frisbie, Phyllis Frisbie, William Frisbie, and Ben Srb.**

Any member of The Portland Historical Society, Inc. can nominate an individual or organization/business that has made a significant non-monetary contribution to preserve and protect Portland's past. Nomination forms can be found on page 6 of this newsletter, or obtained at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History, 492 Main St, Portland.

**The Portland Historical Society, Inc.**  
**William J. Van Beynum Award Nomination Form**

**The Portland Historical Society, Inc.**, a volunteer-driven organization, is a non-profit corporation that depends on the support of many in order to succeed. We feel that it is important to recognize and value contributions made by members and others. In that spirit, the Portland Historical Society created the **William J. Van Beynum Award** in 2009. This award recognizes an individual or organization/business for an outstanding contribution of time, talent, or service to the Society's mission to preserve and protect Portland's past. The award was established to honor the memory of William J. Van Beynum, who tirelessly volunteered his time to research, promote, and document the history of Portland.

**Nominee**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominator**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please summarize your reasons for nomination:

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Please return form, **postmarked no later than November 1**, to: Awards Committee, The Portland Historical Society, Inc., P. O. Box 98, Portland, Ct. 06480-0098.

The awards are presented each year at the Portland Historical Society's Annual Meeting, currently held in January.

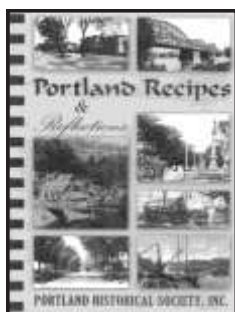
## FROM THE CALLANDER HOUSE CUPBOARD



2010  
PORTLAND  
HERITAGE CALENDAR  
*Scenes from  
Portland's Farms*  
Price: \$8/ea.



**PORTLAND  
SCENES  
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*Hand painted by  
Connecticut Artist*  
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REFLECTIONS**  
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friends. \$8.*

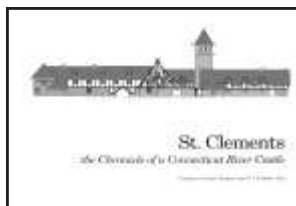


**IMAGES OF PORTLAND**  
*By Robert McDougall*  
128 pages of  
history in photos  
of Portland. \$20

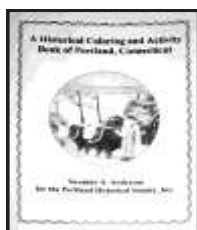


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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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City, ST, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

| QUANTITY  | ITEM | COST | TOTAL |
|---|------|------|-------|
|   |      |      |       |
|   |      |      |       |
|   |      |      |       |
| Shipping: Please add \$2 for each \$12 of order |      |      |       |
| Total cost of order                             |      |      |       |

# CALENDAR . . . .

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

**Feb 23 - "Oscar Hedstrom & the Indian motorcycle"**  
by George Gilbert

**Mar 7 - Museum Open 2-4 pm**

**Mar 23 - "Stories in Stone"** by Jelle deBoer, Ph.D.,  
how early settlers discovered and exploited  
Connecticut's natural resources - Senior Center

**Apr 4 - Museum Open 2-4 pm**

**Apr 27 - Program to be announced**

**May 2 - Museum Open 2-4 pm**

**May 8 - TOWN-WIDE TAG SALES DAY**



*The Hedstrom-Carlson Corn Crib donated by the  
Mattabeseck Audubon Society in its new home behind  
The Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland  
History and suitably decorated for the holidays.*

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**NEWSLETTER** - *Phyllis, Bill and Claire Frisbie, 2-8-09*

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## **Newsletter!**

Ruth Freeburg  
George Gilbert  
Eugene Sullivan

### **DIRECTORS**

President - Susanne Anderson  
1st Vice President - Deborah Ellsworth  
2nd Vice President - Martha Lutecki  
Recording Secretary - Linda Cunningham  
Corresponding Secretary - Joanne Lippi  
Treasurer - James McCabe

**2010**

### **SOCIETY OFFICERS**

Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

**PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



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