



# PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

## Winter 2017 NEWSLETTER

Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History  
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### THE PORTLAND PUMPKIN GROWERS

by George M. Gilbert III



*Trophies and Fun at the Annual Weigh Off*

During the Fall of 2000, there was a buzz going around town of a small group of individuals who were growing giant pumpkins. It was about to start catching on. Arthur (V.P.) and Sonia Johnson hosted a group of interested gardeners at their home to start a movement...an orange movement. Under the able

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## FESTIVAL OF WREATHS

December 2 & 3  
Noon to 4 pm daily

Carriage House behind  
329 Main St

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*Pumpkins lined up ready to be weighed at Fall Pumpkin Growers Weigh-Off.*

# 2017 FESTIVAL OF WREATHS

## JINGLE & MINGLE



Our **6th annual Festival of Wreaths** will take place Saturday and Sunday, December 2 & 3, 2017, in the carriage house at 329 Main Street.

Again this year, we have invited local businesses, organizations, clubs, families and individuals to decorate and donate a wreath for this ticket raffle. Each year we have raffled over 30 wreaths and we promise to raffle festive and fun-loving wreaths again this year. Tabletop trees and holiday centerpieces are also accepted for this Festival.

You can help continue this tradition in Portland by making a wreath for this special fundraiser. If you prefer, a financial donation may be made to the Festival and your name will be posted during the event. Or if you like the idea of a decorated wreath and just don't have the time or don't consider yourself crafty, for a donation of \$30.00 one of our Society elves will make a holiday decoration in your name! We ask that everyone register by Thursday, November 30 so that we can plan our space.

On Saturday and Sunday, December 2 and 3, we will host two days of Portland folks, young and old, wearing their warmest sweaters, gathering to see some great holiday decorations, enjoying something warm to drink and homemade cookies, making new acquaintances over laughter and holiday cheer — “Jingle & Mingle”! From noon to 4 pm on the days of the Festival, tickets can be purchased and placed in the gift bags near the wreaths you would like to take home. On Sunday afternoon at 3:30 pm, the Portland High School A Capella Singers will again entertain us with seasonal songs. Shortly after 4 on Sunday, the winning names will be pulled before the start of Portland's Parade of Lights.

All proceeds from this event will be used to further the Society's mission to preserve Portland's history and to fund educational projects for the community. Last year we raffled over 30 wreaths and we are eagerly anticipating the arrival of many fun loving and festive wreaths created by the artsy and crafty folks of Portland this year!

Please contact Deb Ellsworth at 860-342-1927 to sign up or send an email to: [PortlandCThistory@gmail.com](mailto:PortlandCThistory@gmail.com).

Check our website for more information, decoration ideas, etc. [www.PortlandHistSoc.org](http://www.PortlandHistSoc.org).

## Thank you, Members and Donors!

It's been another year of community activities and collecting. Now we would like to take this opportunity to ask for your support for the coming year. Your Historical Society depends on Volunteers and Donations to accomplish its mission of collecting, preserving and sharing Portland's history.

This year we applied and have just been chosen to be part of Connecticut Collections (CTCo) - "an open-source, online resource tool that allows history and heritage organizations to accomplish three of their primary goals 1) to privately manage their organization collections in a state-of-the-art collections management system, 2) to share their collections with the public through a portal that includes collections from other CTCo users, and 3) to preserve their digital collections and associated metadata in the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) where they will be safe for generations to come." This is a huge step forward for our collections management, and requires money and volunteers as we continue to work to make our collections more accessible to all. (Connecticut Collections was created by the Connecticut League of History Organizations, based on a customization of the Collective Access Collections Management software.)



Speaking of collections, the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History provides a place to show our collection to visitors, and is the repository for most of our collection. We continue to do necessary repairs to keep our home "healthy". Your donations support these activities and the ongoing upkeep of this structure.



*Guests enjoyed refreshments and music in the lovely garden setting during the Hubbard Farm Tour.*

Informative programs on local history such as Hearth Cooking Demonstration and Tasting and Hubbard Farmstead Tour provide all those interested with learning opportunities in Portland History.

A membership/donation envelope is enclosed. Your membership expiration date is above your name on the newsletter mailing label.

*Any questions, please call Claire Frisbie at 860-335-8581 or email [PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com](mailto:PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com).*

**THANKS AGAIN!**

## Portland Pumpkin Growers

*(Continued from page 1)*

leadership of Mark Luckhardt and Arthur Johnson a group of motivated pumpkin growers evolved and continues on to this day. They called themselves “The Portland Pumpkin Growers” (PPG).



*As a pumpkin matures it is always a good idea to protect it from the high hot summer sun.*

The pumpkins have grown larger through the club’s years. Rick and Terry Kelsey had bragging rights in the 2001 season with a 521 lb. giant pumpkin. Brian and Suzanne Schultz’s pumpkin topped the scale in 2017 at 883 pounds. The largest Club pumpkin was grown by Brian and Suzanne in 2016 weighing in at a massive **1006 pounds!**

Growing giant pumpkins from seed to maturity is not an easy task. Each spring the club gathers to have a



*Mark Luckhardt, President of the Portland Pumpkin Growers, accepts a Certificate of Appreciation presented by Carol Gilbert for the Portland Fair Committee.*



*Vice President Arthur Johnson pulls the Portland Pumpkin Growers float on a vintage John Deere 40 in the Portland Memorial Day Parade.*

Blues Breaker Seed Give Away hosted by Billy and Kathi Ackerman where everyone gets their seeds thereby officially kicking off the Pumpkin growing season. There are many phases of a pumpkin’s life, from the seed to the finished gourd. A lot can go wrong throughout the process. The group helps one another overcome problems that occur throughout the growing season, never losing sight of the Club Motto which is: *“It is a pumpkin we’re growing, FUN IS WHERE IT’S AT.”* They have a newsletter called “The Buzzin Orange” that offers Motivating Advice from Inspirational leadership amongst other topics of interest and columns such as Curcubits Bits. In past years, the season is wrapped up at a social gathering hosted by Warren and Jackie Breece.

Portland Pumpkin Growers continues to grow pumpkins to this day. They have participated in town events such as the Portland Memorial Day Parade. You may also have seen the display of this talented assemblage at the Portland Fair. They have participated at our Fair every year since their humble beginning so many can view their labors at the Giant Pumpkin Display. Hats off to the Portland Pumpkin Growers. Who will have bragging rights for 2018?



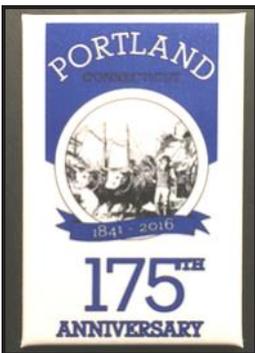
# The Gift Giving Time of the Year

Remember, when you give these gifts, you also give back to the Society!



**Turquoise Glass Schooner Suncatcher** portraying a wooden “brownstoner” schooner Suncatcher measures approximately 4.25” diameter. *Price: \$15.00*

**“What’s in a Name?” Bell** produced by East Hampton’s *Bevin Brothers Manufacturing*. Bell measures 3”W x 3.5”H x 2.25”D. Printed black on white. *Price: \$10.00*



**175th Anniversary Commemorative Book** - Over 60 pages of Portland history with articles written by various authors. *\$5.00*

**150th Anniversary Commemorative Book** from 1991. *Price: \$5.00*

**125th Anniversary Book** from 1966, Timeline by William VanBeynum. *\$5.00*

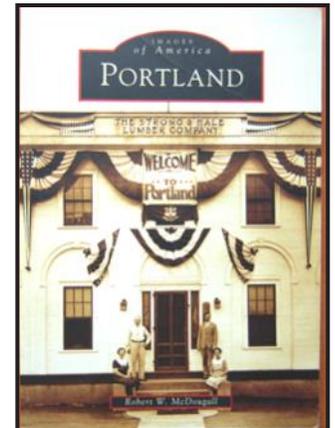
**175th Anniversary Commemorative Magnets** Size: 1 3/4”x 2 3/4”. *\$1.00*



**Images of Portland** by Robert McDougall  
128 pages of history photos of Portland. *\$20*

**Eight Antique Photo Postcards (circa 1900) pack of 8/\$1**  
1 Main St toward River, 2 Main St looking West,  
3 Soldiers Monument, 4 Trinity Cemetery Font,  
5 Engine House #1, 6 Town Hall/Buck Library,  
7 Trinity Church, 8 Nathaniel White House

**Decorative Linen Tea Towel**  
Portland Scenes in maroon and white *\$5.00*



## 5 Ways to Make Your Purchases:

**Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History** - 2nd Sundays - 2- 4 p.m. - next open December 10

**Festival of Wreaths** - Saturday and Sunday, December 2 & 3, Noon to 4 p.m.

Call Deb - 860-342-1927

Email [PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com](mailto:PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com)

**Mail order to:** Portland Historical Society, PO Box 98, Portland CT 06480 - Send payment for products plus shipping (\$7 for 1-2 items or \$14.00 for 3+ items)

*We now accept credit cards. Call Deb (860-342-1927) if you would like to place a credit card order by phone.*

