



PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 98, Portland, CT 06480

November 2020 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. 46 No. 2

This article is in a series on local businesses to inform all on the variety of Businesses and the People that own and operate them who are an integral part of the fabric of our Portland Community.

C.S.B. Incorporated

by George M. Gilbert III

On a quiet summer afternoon I was off to the side of the road on Route 17 when I heard a truck approaching up a grade. Since the major impact of COVID 19 in March, April, and May, there has been a gradual ramping up of traffic to pre-COVID-19 times. Just a few feet from where I was standing a late model Toyota came to a complete stop on this major thoroughfare through Portland. I could hear the truck approaching, but could not yet see it. Certainly the driver of the truck could not see the car at a complete stop on 17. The driver of the car was oblivious to the circumstances as it continued to remain completely stopped in the road. As the truck crested the hill, you could hear the engine decelerate engaging the Jake brake, and the truck driver applying brakes. The truck with a full load of water came to a complete stop behind the Toyota. Another close call in the life of a professional truck driver. The truck was a beautiful Peterbilt with Charlie's Water Wagon painted on the side of the tank.

That incident stuck with me for a few days until it occurred to me that I should approach them to learn



(Continued on page 2)



2019 Festival of Wreaths display

A Twist on Our Annual Festival of Wreaths

We are happy to announce that our **9th Annual Festival of Wreaths** will happen this year, but it has been adapted to fit into this 2020 year.

As we go to press, people are responding to our call for wreaths or holiday decorations for our first ever online sale. Traditionally, this has been a tea-cup raffle — some people won a beautiful wreath on a single ticket, some people won their favorite wreath by placing all their tickets in a single bag. It was a game of chance.

In order to keep everyone safe this holiday season, the decision has been made to create **an online shop of our donated decorations and wreaths**. You will be able to look at photos and read descriptions of the decorations and purchase them online for a set price. Most will list for \$20-\$35 but some may list for higher prices, depending on size and decoration.

Photos will be posted on our Facebook page and information will be on www.PortlandHistSoc.org, our website. Online sales will open on Saturday, November 28 at 10am. Just follow the link from our homepage or Facebook page. Additional wreaths may be added after the opening date so be sure to check back often!

All proceeds from this fundraiser help to maintain the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History, to present programs for our community and to preserve Portland's history. (See ad on back page)

(C.S.B. Inc. - Continued from page 1)

more about the water delivery business. After all, water wagons are not a common profession. After several tries to reach Charlie's Water Wagon, I was able to make contact with Jackie Shefcyk who agreed to an interview. Jackie told me that Todd Roccapiore, the President and driving force of CSB, should be there as well. Being very busy, Todd agreed to a 6:30 a.m. interview.

Charlie Shefcyk started his business in Middletown in 1972. He was a carpenter by trade and wanted to start a business of his own. Being a staunch family man, he named his business C.S.B. Inc. for Charlie, and his two sons, Steve and Bill. C.S.B. Inc. operated out of South Main Street in Middletown until property on 100 Brownstone Avenue, Portland became available for rental in 1986. Initially, Charlie sold and delivered bulk home heating oil and kerosene in trucks that he modified to suit the business needs.



Humble beginnings - Charlie's 1951 Chevrolet that he modified and used for deliveries.

Jackie and Charlie were married in 1992. Music was a big part of their life together. Charlie was in a country band for twenty-five years and their band the "Country Kings" was inducted into the CT Country Music Hall of Fame. Charlie also played with many bluegrass bands, he had a beautiful voice and was a talented musician playing the piano, mandolin, fiddle, guitar and bass guitar.

Charlie and Jackie purchased the property CSB now occupies at 75 Brownstone Avenue in 1992. Together, they completely renovated the office and garage since the office was damaged from a fire, the garage did not have a roof, and the property was an overgrown mess. The Brownstone Avenue property is a unique piece of land that borders the south Brownstone Quarry.

Jackie is the daughter of Rudolph and Janet Landry



The CSB garage on Brownstone Avenue where all building and maintenance is performed.

and the sister of Jim Landry, who owns and operates Evergreen Landscaping. Jackie has been active in CSB running the office, overseeing scheduling, and maintaining the financial aspects of the business. After retirement, Jackie's dad, Rudy, helped Jackie since he was a retired accountant. Rudy often rode in the trucks and did miscellaneous jobs for CSB. During the summer months when the fuel/kerosene business was slow, C.S.B. Inc kept busy installing,



Jackie and Charlie circa 2009

(Continued on page 4)

Your Memberships Make Our Activities Possible!

*Your memberships and donations fund the activities of the **Portland Historical Society and the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History.***

Our museum has been closed since March due to the pandemic. In the meantime, we continue to work on and plan maintenance and upgrades for the Ruth Callander House and the surrounding property. As with any historic house, there are many ongoing requirements, along with plans for Museum improvements.

*Our activities in the last year have focused on **teaching townspeople and visitors about Portland's history** through programs and displays.*

In October 2019, Eve Kahn, author, researcher, and journalist, presented her program and shared her book on the artist, Mary Williams, who spent many years visiting relatives in Portland and painting the local views.



*Sheryl Faye as
Susan B. Anthony*

In November and March for several years, our talented board member, Alexia Belperron, has given Hearth Cooking Demonstrations with excellent and interesting dishes shared with the audience.

At our January 2020 Annual Meeting, the talented actor, Sheryl Faye, portrayed Susan B. Anthony and gave us all a great history lesson to begin this 100th anniversary year of women gaining the vote in the United States of America.

We are creating a virtual presentation so that the Museum may again this year share Portland's history with the 3rd grade classes of Gildersleeve School.

Our engaging Board President, George Gilbert, continues to research and document the local businesses and the people who run them in Portland to create the fascinating series of articles you have seen in this newsletter for the last several years.

Our annual Festival of Wreaths goes online this year to allow members and friends to buy their favorite hand created wreath.

*Thank you for your support in the past and please renew your membership with the enclosed membership/donation envelope. **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.*

Thanks again!

(C.S.B Inc. - Continued from page 2)

removing, and remediating tanks.



Charlie climbing out of one of his early Pete's in the early 1990s.

Todd started working with Charlie at 11 years old. Taking an early interest in the business, Todd worked every job that Charlie needed done. Some were not all that pleasant such as cleaning out the tanks and equipment. Jackie's dad, Rudy, often reminded Todd to, "Make sure you do something you love for a living." Todd loved what he was doing and his perseverance paid off when he purchased a majority share of the business as a partner in 2001. Around that time, C.S.B. Inc. was picking up home heating oil at the Hess terminal in Wethersfield. An associate there kept telling Todd that he should consider hauling water since there are very few people in that business locally. Todd and Charlie took his suggestion to heart and modified a Peterbilt truck and trailer to haul water. The rest is history.

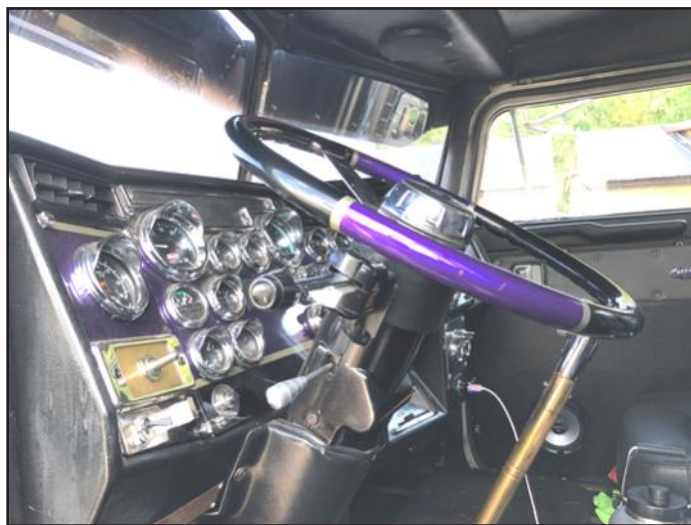


2007 Peterbilt that Todd retrofitted and painted.

Since then, Todd has modified many trucks, winning ten National Championships throughout the country. In 2012 at show in Joplin, Missouri, Todd donated all of his \$10,000 prize money back to Joplin helping those affected by the tornadoes that ripped through

that area causing horrific damage to life and property. Joplin sent back to CSB an itemized document showing where every dollar they donated was spent. When Todd retrofits a truck and trailer for hauling water, he takes it to the truck shows for the first year. After winning a stack of blue ribbons, he puts the rigs into service hauling water and pulling their dump trailers. These trucks are not babied. All truck maintenance is performed on site by CSB, Inc.

Sadly, Charlie died in March of 2009 at the age of seventy, leaving his mark on the business he had owned and operated for 37 years.



Not only does Todd modify the truck exteriors, but he also does the interiors. Here is the interior of the 1993 Peterbilt.

The Town of Portland benefits by the success of C.S.B. Inc. since all the water that is delivered is purchased from the Town. Deliveries can vary from two hundred gallons to 6,000 gallons delivered throughout the State of Connecticut. The water they sell is the highest quality water available.

Delivering water is hard work. Water is heavy, weighing in at 8.35 pounds per gallon. The drivers must manipulate the hoses that are filled with water. Not only do you have to be a good driver positioning the truck and trailer in critical areas but you also must have a strong back to move the hoses.

Clean Slate Environmental is owned by Todd's wife Beth. Todd and Beth have grown the environmental business and now have two full time employees who work for both CSB Inc and Clean Slate Environmental. They keep busy either delivering fuel oil and water for CSB or hauling contaminated soil for Clean Slate Environmental.

(Continued on page 5)

Collecting the Pandemic

Grant Received

Portland Library wishes to develop a lasting record of our community’s experience of life in 2020. History continues to be made during this pandemic year. We have been experiencing concerns, courage, ingenuity, kindness, and caring; all these are demonstrated by community members, leaders, parents, teachers, and essential workers. The community will need a lasting record of our challenges, and most importantly will need to celebrate and remember our endurance.

The Portland Historical Society applied for and was awarded a grant of CARES funding through CT Humanities to assist with “Taking Care of the Museum” during this difficult year. Society board members are very thankful to have this additional \$2500 to use in the upkeep of our museum and to assist in replacing funds from cancelled activities.

Tag Sale Fund Drive/Matching Gift

The Portland Historical Society joins the Library in promoting the development of a collection that will eventually lead to public displays including online exhibits and exhibits at the Library and Historical Society’s Ruth Callender House Museum of Portland History. The library welcomes all community members to contribute documents of all kinds that are related to life in the COVID era in the town of Portland. Send us your photographic work, drawings or paintings, digital videos, or social media posts, that include notable scenes and activities that depict life in our community since March 2020. Your written stories also will be appreciated. You may depict your group’s activities, describe a local hero, or just show interesting things about Portland’s situation related to the pandemic. A digital format is preferred (PDF or JPG). Please find more information and a submission form on the Library’s webpage. www.portlandlibraryct.org
Questions: call 860-342-6770 or jnocek@portlandct.org

The 24th Annual Town Wide Tag Sale Day had to be cancelled in May due to the pandemic. As this is our largest annual fundraiser for Society and Museum costs, we needed another way to make up our budget. Last Spring in this newsletter, we stated the problem and asked for donations. The response was tremendous. One anonymous member offered to match all donor funds up to \$2000. Portland tag sale and history lovers and members met the challenge and donated more than enough to make up the Tag Sale Day losses. We are exceedingly grateful for the generosity of our members and friends in this difficult time.



Darlene Rice and Dean Soucy recently invited Society board members to see their work at the historic north brownstone quarry, Quarry View.



(C.S.B. Inc. - Continued from page 4)

Undoubtedly, Charlie is looking down and is proud of the job Jackie Shefcyk and Todd Roccapiore are doing perpetuating the business that he created and moving it into the future. Hopefully they will keep on trucking for years to come.

Jackie and Todd posing in early morning in front of their 1993 Peterbilt that is loaded and ready to go to work.

2020 FESTIVAL OF WREATHS JINGLE & MINGLE



**ONLINE Sale opens
Saturday, November 28
10AM**

Check website for link
www.PortlandHistSoc.org
Photos and descriptions,
prices \$20— \$35 & a few higher
Pay online with credit/debit card



Check back often for additional wreaths and decorations!

NEWSLETTER - Editor: Claire Frisbie, 11/20/2020, PortlandCTHistory@gmail.com 860-335-8581
Printing by DEL Printing, LLC, 42 Gospel Lane, Portland, CT - 860-342-2959

November 2020 Newsletter!

FINANCE BOARD
Frank Connelly
George Law
David O'Brien

COLLECTIONS BOARD
Rebecca Robinson
Frank Winski

TRUSTEES
Claire Frisbie
Robert McDougall
Christine Sullivan

DIRECTORS
Alexia Belperron
Amy Knous
Martha Lurecki

2020 SOCIETY OFFICERS
President - George Gilbert
1st Vice President - VACANT
2nd Vice President - Julie Macksood
Recording Secretary - Deborah Ellsworth
Corresponding Secretary - Shelli Nolan
Treasurer - James McCabe

Festival of Wreaths ONLINE & Membership Renewal Envelope

PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480
Address Service Requested



NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MIDDLETOWN CT
PERMIT NO 575