



Kent Historical Society

Newsletter



Volume 6 Number 1

Special Edition

March, 2005

The Smithsonian Institute is coming to Kent!

Barn Again! Celebrating an American Icon[®]

As we have mentioned in previous newsletters, The Kent Historical Society is going to host a very special exhibit this summer at Seven Hearths and we need your help! This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to say you have worked for The Smithsonian Institute! We hope you will be interested in a short-term volunteer commitment to an event that is shaping up to be fun for the whole town.



The Hopson barns on Main Street of yesteryear.

The Board of Selectmen has declared 2005 to be *The Year of the Barn* in Kent (see p. 3), and the town is beginning to respond. The KHS is working with The Kent Memorial Library, the Kent Art Association, the Town Clerk's Office, the Chamber of Commerce, the Conservation Commission, the Sloan-Stanley Museum and the local schools, and other organizations to plan events to accompany the exhibit. There is a barn tour in the works - visiting old barns that have been turned into elegant houses. The Sloan-Stanley Museum is planning a Farm Festival day on May 14th, which will be the unofficial kick-off of the *Barn Again!* season in Kent.

In August of last year, Marge McAvoy and Beth Dooley, along with Barb Russ, Curator of the Sloan-Stanley, went to a well-attended planning session for *Barn Again*. The list of organizations statewide that

are planning *Barn Again* related events is huge and very exciting! Many private museums and history

organizations across the state will be joining the Connecticut Humanities Council; the CT Dept of Agriculture; the CT League of History Organizations; the Antiquarian and Landmark Society; The CT Commission on Arts, Tourism, Culture, History & Film; the USDA; The American Farmland Trust and the Working Lands Alliance to make *Barn Again* an unforgettable ex-

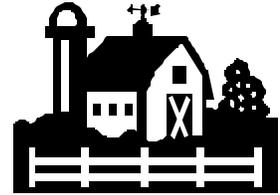
perience for all of Connecticut. Kent is so very lucky to have been chosen, along with Lebanon and Windsor, as a host town for this remarkable exhibit. We are hoping you will want to be a part of the excitement!

There are volunteer opportunities of all kinds beginning soon and running through the end of August. The jobs range from a few hours to several days, and are as simple as dusting the rooms at Seven Hearths to designing T-shirts or calendars for sale during the exhibit. Some jobs don't even require you to leave your house — you just need to sit at home and come up with ideas. So, please read on, and let us know soon how you would like to help!

TAKE YOUR PICK!

Quick 'n Easy:

- Help clean and spruce up Seven Hearths this spring
- Help clean up Seven Hearths gardens
- Help move furniture before the exhibit is installed
- Hang posters around town
- Mail press releases
- Make food for volunteers during training day and cleaning days
- Share your barn photos and stories
- Spread the word about *Barn Again*



Moderate:

- Greet visitors to the exhibit at Seven Hearths. Shifts of 3 or 6 hours. Saturdays and Sundays from 10 to 4, possibly Friday afternoons too.
This is perhaps the most important job of all, and the one for which we need the most help. You will welcome our guests, answer simple questions (after a short training session), and help keep a eye out for the security of Seven Hearths. You do not need to guide anyone through the exhibit, nor have extensive knowledge about barns. You just need to enjoy talking with people and to have fun! You may recruit a friend or two to help you. We need a minimum of three people in the building at all times.

A Bit More Challenging (You get a gold star for doing these):

- Join in our Bird Barn project. This will be along the lines of last year's Art Dogs, but not as large. We need people to build birdhouses or birdfeeders in the shape of barns. The Bird Barns will be on display in town all Summer and will be sold to the highest silent-bidder.
- Design a 2006 calendar, using the Historical Society's collection of old barn and farm photos. Calendar would be for sale during exhibit.
- Design a *Barn Again* T-shirt for sale.
- Design a children's program for kids visiting the exhibit:
A coloring book? A scavenger hunt? A drawing contest?
- Help with publicity: radio shows, press interviews, press releases, posters, you name it!

(continued on next page)

Gold Star projects, continued:

- Help us plan and carry out our Preview Party. We have one high-ticket item being donated to the Society for raffle. We need more. Also help with the party planning, and help at the party itself. The tentative date is either June 10th or June 17th.
- Research the histories of various barns and farms in Kent.
- Plan a story writing contest for children and adults.
- Come up with even more ideas for *Barn Again!* The sky's the limit!!!



Another great opportunity:

On May 14th, the Sloan Stanley Museum will kick off the Barn Again season with a Farm Festival Day on the grounds of the museum. This will also be the opening of the museum's own summer season. Curator Barb Russ has planned a very exciting, event filled day, and also needs help there, just for that day. There will be many booths with vendors, farmers, artisans and more. The students from the HVRHS Vo-Ag department will be there, possibly with some new born baby animals. The Festival Day is still in its planning stages, but Barb will welcome any help. Please leave a message for her at 927-3849 if you would like to help!



WHEREAS: The Connecticut Humanities Council, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, is sponsoring the tour of the traveling exhibit "Barn Again! Celebrating an American Icon" to four Connecticut communities in 2005; and

WHEREAS: "Barn Again! Celebrating an American Icon" explores the barn as an architectural structure and looks at the origin and fate of the barn in its roles as warehouse, factory, and legend; and

WHEREAS: Area resident and artist Eric Sloane documented barns throughout the State and country, now preserved in exhibits at the Sloan Stanley Museum in Kent; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Kent will host the traveling exhibit in the summer of 2005;

WHEREAS: The Connecticut Humanities Council and the Kent Historical Society will be exploring and celebrating the role of barns in the history and economy of Kent and the State of Connecticut throughout the year; and

WHEREAS: The preservation of historic barns perpetuates Kent's unique sense of place, reflecting the hopes of farmers past and present.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, by virtue of the authority vested in the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Kent in the State of Connecticut do hereby proclaim 2005, as

THE YEAR OF THE BARN

in Kent, Connecticut.

IN WITNESS WHEREAS, I, Dolores R. Schiesel, First Selectman, have hereto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Town of Kent to be affixed this 1st day of February of the year of our Lord two thousand and five.

Seal
attest

For those of you who are not familiar with Barn Again! or who would like to learn a little more about the wonderful Smithsonian program that is providing us with this exhibit, there is a website at www.museumonmainstreet.org. It explains the whole traveling exhibit concept and shows a little bit of one or two of the kiosks that will be in our exhibit. It explores the current trend of saving old barns, such as the Segar barn being rebuilt on Segar Mountain Road, and celebrates the long and varied history of barns in America. We urge you to take a look at the website so you will be able to better understand what all the excitement is about!

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Est. 1954

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at the Swift House

This newsletter is compiled by Marge McAvoy,
designed by Lynne Hicks, SouthKent,
and sponsored by Moore & More Printing, Millerton, NY

Kent Quiz: Do you recognize this barn?
(Its identity is mentioned in this newsletter)



An old barn in transition to a new life

Kent Historical Society

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Kent Historical Society MEMBERSHIP & VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SOCIETY ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Volunteer interest (please circle): Archives Host/Hostess
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