



# Kent Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 15 , Number 1

Kent, Connecticut

January 2014

## What Volunteers Mean to Us: A Tribute to Our Foundation by Marge Smith

If there's one supreme thing I've learned in all my years as Executive Director of this great historical society, it is that we are nothing, I repeat - *nothing* - without our volunteers! The year 2013 really demonstrated this emphatically. One of the busiest and most productive years we've ever had was made possible by all of you, and the board and staff of the KHS would like to say *thank you*.

At the risk of forgetting a name or two, we decided to make a list of everyone we could think of who helped us this year - with the complex Nelson campaign, the new Art Barn, the summer exhibits, the children's programs, the Strategic Plan, our Sunday Series, work in the office, clean up at Seven Hearths and the schoolhouse, and in so many other ways. If you gave your time, donated items for fundraising or for our collection, or did anything beyond paying your membership, you should be acknowledged! Of course, our faithful dues-paying members are especially appreciated. Your names appear on another list as well.

The KHS board members have pitched in to help add names to the lists that you will see in this newsletter, and we are gratified to see these lists continue to grow! If we have misspelled your name or you would like to be known by a nick-name, do let us know. We care about doing it right.

Enjoy these snapshots from 2013 and some of our favorite projects of previous years!



**Cub Scout Pack #11  
cleaning the Skiff Mt  
schoolhouse - spring 2012**



**Volunteer auctioneer  
Brooks Atwood at the  
Fife 'n Drum Nelson  
fundraising event.**



**Kent Center School 8th  
graders creating Nelson-  
inspired paintings at 7H for  
our student art exhibit on  
November 2 and 3 at the  
Community House.  
See story on page 11.**



**George deVilbiss with  
the paddle at the 2007  
Ice Cream Social**



**One of three floral arrangements by Debby Bennett of the  
Kent Greenhouse - displayed at the Community House next  
to the original painting and the vase that appeared in it.**



**2011 spring clean-  
up work party at  
Seven Hearths**

The list of people who pitched in to help us this year is astounding. From donating bottles of wine for the wine auction or antique hardware for the Art Barn door to putting sweat equity into the Seven Hearths yard, and everything in between, you made it possible for us to accomplish so much this year.

Bruce Adams  
 Lloyd Albin  
 Portia Clark Allen  
 Ky Anderson  
 Kip Armstrong  
 Brooks and Estelle Atwood  
 Luci Atwood  
 Martha Atwood  
 Robert Austin  
 Bill and Catherine Bachrach  
 Priscilla Belcher  
 Debby Bennett  
 Amy Bentley  
 Fr. Tom Berberich  
 Charlie Bigelow  
 Marsi Boon  
 Kathryn Boughton  
 Peggy Braden  
 Charles Bradley  
 Maureen and Tom Brady  
 Mary Brash  
 Melode Brasher  
 Deborah Brasher  
 Lisa Brody and Kent School art students  
 Bill Brown  
 Chris Bouchard  
 Ron Budney  
 Hugh Busby  
 Nancy Bushnell & Vic Reiling  
 Bill Camp  
 Jane Ellen Canfield  
 Kevin Capobianco  
 Betty Carlson  
 Patricia Carr  
 Patti and Bill Case  
 Dorothy Casey  
 John and Carolyn Casey  
 Rob Casey  
 Tom Casey  
 Tim Chapin  
 Zanne and Lawrence Charity  
 Karen Chase  
 Sarah Chase and Bill Watts  
 Melissa Cherniske  
 Al Coffill and Kent Center School art students  
 Linda Cohen



**“Barn Again” bird barns, 2005. Created and donated by local crafts people for an auction largely organized by Bill Bachrach.**



**Kevin Capobianco helping out at Seven Hearths in 2011**

Colonial Lords of Manors  
 Irene Connors  
 Kathy and Lizzie Craughwell-Varda  
 Greg Crosbie  
 Rebekah Crouch  
 Denis Curtiss  
 Gary and Bobbie Davis  
 Richard and Beth Davis  
 Mr. and Mrs. Oscar de la Renta  
 Debbie Devaux  
 Robin Dill-Herde  
 Angela Dimmitt  
 Paul and Beth Dooley  
 Mo and Patrick Dore  
 David Dorward  
 Aileen Dotson  
 Joseph Dwyer  
 Ruth Epstein  
 Mike and Anne Everett  
 Carolyn Fisher  
 Carol Franken  
 Elaine Friedman  
 Pat Gallagher  
 Rob and Marilyn Gansell  
 Bill Gawel  
 Aija and Mark Gibson, and daughters  
     Gwendolyn, Catherine and Anneken  
 John Gleason  
 Marcia Glynn  
 Sarah Good  
 Tim Good  
 Roger Gonzales  
 George-Ann Gowan  
 Amy Gruar  
 Dave Grusauski  
 Myra Guerra  
 Carol Hall  
 Mark and Nancy Hamilton  
 Tamara Hangren and Kevin  
     Pearson  
 Shanley Hanlon  
 Howard Hart  
 Tom Hartch  
 Sharon Hartwick and Anthony Antonios  
 Andrew Healy  
 Philip Heimlh



**Roger Peet and Georgianne Kent portray grieving parents James and Harriet Burton in our 2004 Civil War cemetery tour**



**John Gleason at our 2004 Husking Bee**

Alice and Jim Hicks  
 Don and Patti Hicks  
 Rodger Hicks, in memory of Lynn Hicks  
 Nat Hill  
 Pam and Walter Irving  
 David Jalbert  
 Russell Jennings  
 Stan and Sandy Jennings  
 Abigail Johnson  
 Anna Johnson and David Wolfe  
 Fran Johnson  
 Hal and Jan Kamm  
 Joyce Kearns  
 Melinda Keck  
 Georgianne Kent  
 Jim Kick  
 Ed & Mary Kirby  
 Robin Killoran  
 Jack and Hedy Kinney  
 Larry King  
 Nancy Kissinger  
 Eliza Klose  
 Donna Kmetz  
 Melissa and Paul Kneuer  
 Betty Krasne  
 Gail Krupa  
 Jon Lafleur  
 Louisa LaFontan  
 Adam and Susu Langlands  
 Betty Lawrence  
 Robin Lawrence  
 Bob and Carol Lenz  
 Martin Levine  
 Rick Levy  
 Kathleen Lindenmayer  
 Charlotte and Dick Lindsey  
 Ed and Kim Little  
 Art Mallery  
 Connie Manes  
 Lib Mankin  
 Jackie Matson  
 Paddy Matson  
 Anne McAndrew and Dave Fairty  
 Henry Mellen  
 Susan Menconi  
 Carol B. Miller  
 Donna Miller  
 Sally Milligan  
 Hugh Mitchell  
 Jeanne Moldal and Betty Ann Sapp



**Stan Jennings  
 speaking at a Sunday  
 Series lecture about  
 the history of St.  
 Luke's Lodge**



**Betty Lawrence  
 donated this  
 Nelson portrait  
 of her aunt**

Justin Money  
 Elizabeth Montgomery  
 Jeff Morgan and Robert Couturier  
 Cheryl Moore and SKS art students  
 Katie and Chris Moore  
 Priscilla Morris  
 Bob Mott  
 Henry W. Mellen  
 Wendy Murphy  
 Linda Nacinovich & Elaine Debet-Fricke  
 Chris Naples  
 C.F. Natale  
 Bonnie Nather (Eder Brothers)  
 Francesca Nichols  
 Pat and John Noneman  
 Andy and Millie Olson  
 Bob Olson  
 Rusty, Ruth and Karina O'Meara  
 Tito Padilla (Hartley & Parker)  
 Linda Palmer  
 Matt Palumbo  
 John Pawloski  
 Steve Pener  
 Pennyghael Foundation  
 Jim Perkins  
 Lynn Perry  
 Don and Mary Peters  
 Karin Peterson  
 Vincent Petraghani and  
 Lawrence Himelfarb  
 Ester Pollard  
 Elissa and George Potts  
 Stephanie Plunkett  
 Charlie Price  
 Christina Purcell  
 Allan Priaulx  
 Lilly Rand and Marvelwood art students  
 Christopher and Stephanie Rehnberg  
 Jennie and Harry C. Rehnberg  
 Metta Rehnberg  
 Jamie Reisch & Eamonn Maguire  
 Millie Rick  
 Ted and Jane Roth  
 Marty and Susie Rothman  
 Cynthia Roznoy  
 Susie and Bob Rundall  
 Nancy Schaefer and Bernie Epstein  
 Ernie and Penny Schmutzler  
 Tom Sebring and Steve Vaughn  
 Greg Sent  
 Karen Shaw



**Painting loaned for exhibit by  
 Vincent Petraghani &  
 Lawrence Himelfarb**

Debbie Shiflett-Fitton  
 Jim Singelman  
 Ira & Maureen Smith  
 Jim Smith  
 Marge Smith  
 Virginia Smith  
 Lee Sohl  
 Judi Soule  
 Peter Starbuck  
 Maggie Stearns  
 Lyn Stirnweiss  
 Paul Stirnweiss  
 Stone/King family  
 Richard K. Strauss (see article on next page)  
 Patsy and Jon Stroble



**Dr. King's sleigh bells, circa 1890. He was the town family doctor. Bells donated by his descendants.**

Ellen Stuart  
 Barbara Sussman  
 Robin Szendy  
 Peter Thompson  
 Thelma Thompson  
 John Toffey  
 Charles Tomlinson  
 Robb Tripp  
 Herb and Nancy Tully  
 Andy Vadnais  
 James and Kate Vick  
 Martha Wakeman and Robert Proctor  
 BB and Don Walden  
 Cliff Waldow  
 Amie Walston  
 Stephanie Wargo  
 Charlie and Elsie Webster  
 Lisa and Alan Weinblatt  
 Bruce Whipple and Michael Ward  
 Bill and Marion Whynott  
 Ron Williams and J. Brownell  
 Susi Williams and Dick Wyman  
 Nancy Wilsea  
 Matt Winkler  
 Steven Wolf  
 John and Lynn Worthington  
 Amy Wynn  
 Angela and Paul Yagid  
 Gabe and Jane Zatlín  
 Tony Zunino



**Antique door latch donated by Michael Ward for the Art Barn**



**Wine and related items for auction, donated by generous supporters**

**Businesses and Organizations:**

Eric Sloane Museum  
 Fife 'n Drum Gift Shop

Fife 'n Drum Restaurant  
 First Congregational Church of Kent  
 Heron Gallery  
 Hopkins Vineyard  
 House of Books  
 J.P. Giffords Market  
 Kent Greenhouse  
 Kent Wine & Spirit  
 Kent Cub Scouts Pack #11  
 Marvelwood School  
 Mattatuck Museum  
 Richard Lindsey Bookseller  
 Roger Sherman Chapter, DAR  
 Sotheby's Real Estate  
 Stair Gallery  
 Torrington Historical Society  
 Town of Kent

**And to everyone who came to our exhibits, attended our programs and visited Seven Hearths - thank YOU!**



**Some of our 2013 board members. L to R: Pam Irving, Charlotte Lindsey, Jeff Morgan, Zanne Charity, Bruce Whipple, Aija Gibson, Roger Gonzales and Dick Lindsey, with Director Marge Smith**



**Board members Tom Sebring, Aija Gibson, Beth Dooley, Charlotte Lindsey, along with the Gibson and Worthington daughters, getting the Art Barn ready for its first exhibit opening reception in July 2013**

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## An Extraordinary Donation!

Richard K. Strauss, a generous man who has never been to Seven Hearths, helped us raise some funds for much needed restoration projects. KHS board member Bruce Whipple learned that Mr. Strauss was selling his New York apartment and looking to make a charitable donation for tax purposes. Richard was downsizing and did not want to move his collection of art and English Georgian antiques to his second home and new permanent residence in Florida. Bruce suggested that he donate everything to the KHS to be used to raise capital for the capital improvements. Bruce worked with Richard on the complicated details that included the appraisals and the move of all of the items from a 29th floor Manhattan apartment.

Richard grew up in the Village of Harrison in Westchester County and attended the Horace Mann School in Riverdale, NY. He attended Cornell University and majored in drama. He then completed his MBA at Cornell University and later worked for Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs and Deutches Bank. During his decade at Goldman Sachs he was their senior industry analyst in charge of money center bank, broker, and investment bank coverage. Richard then moved to Boca Raton, FL and went back to acting. He has recently appeared in the movies I Do (2012), G.B.F (2013) and Helicopter Mom (2014).

Most of the money will be used towards the restoration of the antique window sashes and broken pane replacement. Antique glass will be used and all of the windows will be reglazed. Given that there are in excess of 54 sashes, the cost will exceed \$30,000 and does not include storm windows, which will be the second phase of the scope to protect collections and save on heating costs in the 1751 structure. It's an expensive but much needed undertaking, and we are so grateful to Richard for a creative solution to help make this happen.



**Nick Brennan and John Anderson of Anderson Glassworks install a newly restored window sash on the second floor rear of Seven Hearths.**



**Happy families attending Joe Brien and his Lost Art Workshop's cooking class on the lawn at Seven Hearths, summer 2013**



**Linda Cohen and her assistant, Abigail Johnson, with the Children's Art Camp participants and their creations at Seven Hearths, summer 2013**



**Long-time board member and volunteer Beth Dooley working on the costume collection inventory with consultant Stacey Danielson in 2009.**

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## Our 2012-2013 members

Bruce and Holly Adams  
Lloyd Albin  
Kevin Alger  
Portia Clark Allen & family\*  
Ky Anderson  
James and Linda Anderson  
Marjorie Anderson  
Kip Armstrong  
Bill Arnold and Stephanie  
Wargo  
Pam Atkins  
Lisa Atkinson and Otto  
Penzler  
Brooks and Estelle Atwood\*  
Luci Atwood\*  
Martha Atwood\*  
Bill and Catherine Bachrach  
David and Debbie Bain  
John and Liddy Baker  
Rich Barber  
Arthur & Phyllis Bargonetti  
Dick and Judith Barlow  
Anne Bass  
Joseph Baxer and Barbara  
Bacewicz\*  
Bob and Jo Bauer  
Bruce and Debby Bennett  
Fr. Tom Berberich  
Fran and Monty Besmer  
Jim and Gini Blackketter  
Marc and Jan Bornn  
Peggy Braden  
Tom and Maureen Brady  
Mary Brash  
Melode and Debbie Brasher  
Ely and Carla Britton  
Tom Britton  
Harmie Brown  
Pixie and Woody Brown\*  
Austi Brown  
Jim Brownell and Rod Williams  
Buck Buchanan\*  
Ron Budny\*  
Cliff and Bobbie Burnett  
Craig and Nina Burr

Nancy Bushnell and Vic  
Reiling  
Karen Butler  
Marie Camp  
Bill Camp\*  
Susan Capek  
Bennett Capers and Seth  
Forman\*  
Betty Carlson  
Marjorie Carmody  
Bill and Patti Case  
Dorothy Casey  
John and Carolyn Casey  
Rob Casey  
Julie Chang and Jamie  
Bernardin  
Zanne & Lawrence Charity\*  
Karen Chase  
Darlene Chase-Cromer\*  
Eric and Elise Cieplik  
Nancy and Bill Cipolla  
Al and Terry Coffill  
Linda Cohen  
Don and Leslie Connery  
Irene Connors\*  
Tom and Priscilla Coons  
Ken and Charmian Cooper  
Ellen Corsell  
Greg Crosbie  
Denis and Barbara Curtiss  
Gary and Bobbie Davis  
Vin and Lois DeMarco  
Deborah Devaux  
Marc and Marilyn DeVos  
Frank & Dorli DeGregorio  
William Dillon & Jeff West  
Randy & Tony DiPentima  
Rosemary Dougal  
Nick and Jane Downes  
Sue Edgerly  
Dick Edwards  
Ed and Ruth Epstein  
Kathleen Esche  
Mike and Anne Everett\*  
Susan Forbes and Bob  
Markowitz  
Phyllis Foster  
Tom and Carol Franken

David Freeman  
Rob and Marilyn Gansel  
Bob and Sabine Gibson  
John and Gerri Gleason  
Eleanor Gobillot  
Tim Good  
Bill and Fran Goodsell  
Mary Grusauski  
Marcia Glynn  
Myra Guerra  
Cyndy Gustafson  
Walt and Carol Hall  
Nancy and Mark Hamilton  
Mark Hanley  
Chris and Lynn Harrington  
Howard Hart  
Jonathan Hart  
Tom and Gail Hartch  
Joanne Hawks  
Harvey Hayden  
Nina Henderson  
Kevin and Robin Herde  
Rich and Jane Hibbard  
Don and Patti Hicks  
Jim and Alice Hicks  
Rodger Hicks\*  
Mary Lou Holmes  
Tanya and Denis Horgan  
Dot Hosterman  
Art and Judy Howland  
Sue Howland  
Lester Hoysradt  
Inness Humphreys and  
Merle Koblenz  
Bob Indorf, Sr.  
Bob and Kolleen Indorf  
Claire Irving\*  
Pam and Walter Irving\*  
Margery & Ted Jennings\*  
Rusty and Sun Ae Jennings  
Stan and Sandy Jennings  
Fran Johnson  
Hal and Jan Kamm\*  
Katherine Kane and Dennis  
DePaul  
Pam Kempe  
Georgianne Kent  
Larry King\*

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Paul and Melissa Kneuer  
Betty Krasne  
Jon Lafleur  
Louisa LaFontan  
Ward & Judith Landrigan  
Diane and Phil Lang  
Russell Lapso and Akram  
Dakhgan  
Joan Larned  
Bob and Carol Lenz  
Rick and Leslie Levy  
Ann Linden  
Dick & Charlotte Lindsey  
Ed and Kim Little  
Mason Lord  
Barbara Lynch  
Bruce & Carol MacRitchie  
Bill Manasse  
Elizabeth Mankin  
Melanie Marks\*  
Doug and Jackie Matson  
Paddy Matson  
Carol Matzke  
John and Laura Mauer  
Frank and Carol McCann  
Barbara McCarthy  
Emily McWhinney  
Susan Menconi and Bruce  
Hoheb\*  
Peter & Judy Messer\*  
Donna Miller\*  
Hugh Mitchell  
Jonathan and Katie Moore  
Owen and Jane Moore  
Stephen & Denise Morocco  
Kristine Mothersele  
Bob Mott  
Jack and Wendy Murphy  
Linda Nacinovich and  
Elaine Debet-Fricke  
Jim and Gail Neill  
Alicia North\*  
Rusty, Ruth and Karina  
O'Meara\*  
Marilyn Ober  
Andy and Elaine Ocif  
Andy and Millie Olson  
Jack and Dot Osborne

Pat and John Noneman  
Marian Pacocha  
Doris Palmer  
Linda and Dan Palmer  
JoAnne & Robert Pappano  
John Pawloski  
Leigh Peet  
Lynn Perry and Michael  
Hallows  
Don and Mary Peters  
Karin Peterson  
Bertha Petith  
Jackie Pflieger  
Stephanie Plunkett  
John Polhemus  
Dick Polhemus  
Ester Pollard  
Elissa and George Potts  
Jim and Faye Preston  
Allan and Jackie Priaux  
Barbara Psarakis  
Susie and Christina Purcell  
Pat Purdy  
Jennie and Chris Rehnberg  
Christopher and Stephanie  
Rehnberg  
Lisby Ritchie  
Janet and Larry Rivkin  
Ted and Jane Roth\*  
Robert Rothenberg  
Cynthia Roznoy  
Susie Rundall  
Diane Ryder  
Dick Scaldini and Arlene  
Bergenthal\*  
Dan and Lorry Schiesel  
Faline Schneiderman  
Lorna Schofield  
Marcia Scholl  
Tom Sebring & Steve Vaughn  
Peggy Seneca  
Sandra Shiflett  
Deborah Shiflett- Fitton  
Janet Skinner  
Ira and Maureen Smith  
Virginia Smith  
Butch and Judi Soule  
Bunny Soule

Peter Starbuck  
Matt and Ane Starr  
Maggie Stearns\*  
Patsy and Jon Stroble  
Gail and Jerry Tobin  
Dixie Todd  
John Toffey\*  
Charles Tomlinson  
Bob and Marian Torre  
Chris Utsogen  
Andy Vadnais and Nancy Lyon  
James and Kate Vick  
Mike Vreeland  
Martha Wakeman and  
Robert Proctor\*  
BB and Don Walden\*  
Amie Walston\*  
Ed and Emma Wathley  
Charlie and Elsie Webster  
Lisa and Alan Weinblatt  
*Estate of Maggie Wells*  
Lynn Werner and Kevin Honan  
Mike West  
Susan West\*  
Bruce Whipple and Michael\*  
Ward  
Jerry and Judy White  
Rev. Roger White  
Ken and JoAnn Whitmore  
Celie & Charlie Whittemore  
Bill and Marion Whynott  
Larry & Margaret Wiener  
Hiram Williams and Peter  
Vaughan  
Matt and Alicia Winter\*  
Susi and Dick Wyman  
David and Anna Wolf  
Alice Wolf  
John and Diane Woodward  
Lynn & John Worthington\*  
Hank and Carol Zaccara\*  
Gabe and Jane Zatlin

**\*New members since January  
2012- welcome to the KHS!**

Thank you to all.  
YOU are the Kent  
Historical Society!



**Susi serving a young guest at the dinner at our 2004 Husking Bee, with Ky Anderson and Fran Johnson**

*In several previous issues of this newsletter, we have shared with you installments of a talk that Susi Casey Williams gave to the Kent Informal Club a few years ago. Speaking of volunteers, Susi is the ultimate! Not only has she contributed frequently to our newsletter, she has until a few months ago served on the Board of Trustees (with perhaps the longest term of anyone besides Miss Emily Hopson), been a major worker bee at all events and projects, a strong supporter and advocate of the KHS, and is our primary go-to source for anything to do with Kent history. And she does this for other organizations as well!*

*She is the daughter of Margaret and Harry Casey, who owned N.M. Watson & Co. with his brother Ed. She grew up in the middle of town on Elizabeth Street, and from early childhood on clearly had her finger on the pulse of her beloved town! She has fond memories of being in the old Watson's general store that carried everything from rump roasts to tennis balls and ten-penny nails. She remembers who lived where in town, what the kids did for entertainment, how the close-knit community took care of its own, and so many other delightful details. At the end of the last installment, she described the crime-prevention and justice system in the small town – a system that would never work in today's complex world. We are grateful to Susi for recording it all. Here, then, is the last installment of this great tale. Thank you, Susi!*

## **Growing Up in Kent, Part 4, by Susi Casey Williams**

And now I get to “our house”, now 26 Elizabeth Street. It was built by Pete Gawel in 1932 when my parents married, and the cost was \$5,000. Living room, dining room, kitchen (with walk-in pantry, of course), and screened porch downstairs; three bedrooms and a bath upstairs. (My dad wanted to be able to walk to work.) My mother had to give up teaching at Kent High School, because it was Depression time and there could only be one bread-winner. The house was fine when there were five of us – Mother and Daddy, sister Tish, born in 1934, brother Rob, born in 1938, and Mary Frances (that's me, but my Dad always called me Suzy, and it stuck). After the war (we kids attached garbage can lids to our bike and raced around the block making a wonderful racket to celebrate VE Day), our household changed. My Aunt Fannie, who probably would have been diagnosed as manic-depressive/bi-polar/schizophrenic today, could no longer live alone at the 19 Lane Street house. My parents added a room at the back of the downstairs, with a small bathroom, to accommodate Aunt Fannie, and a room and bath upstairs for my brother, so we finally had a guest room. Then my cousins, Bill Hyde and Jack Brown, got out of the service to work at The Store, and took up residence in our attic, where there were two rooms and built-in beds. Suddenly we were eight. I don't know how my mother did it.

Back to what we didn't have, metal being so hard to come by: no washer and dryer (she used set-tubs in the cellar with a hand wringer in between them). There were clotheslines in the back yard and in the cellar. Mother had those adjustable wooden frames with needles all around the edges for drying curtains – real finger pricklers, so the curtains often had tiny blood spots from our efforts! But at least Mother didn't have to iron Daddy's shirts, thanks to Marie Mettey. After the war, we got a round-shaped, Easy spin-dry washing machine. What heaven! Dryer and dishwasher came much later, when The Store began to sell them and we could get them wholesale (of course!). My father always said he had three perfectly good dishwashers: my sister, my brother and me.

No vacuum cleaner. We hauled rugs out into the yard, hung them on the clothesline, beat the dust out of them, and hauled them back in. (Yes, the children were expected to help with these projects!)

Certainly we had no chef! My mother produced many meals a day – early breakfast for Daddy and Bill and Jack, so they could be at work by 7. Then breakfast for the kids and Aunt Fannie. A break for housework and shopping. We kids walked home from school for lunch at noon. The men came home for lunch about 12:30. Daddy often came home for a light supper with us kids about 5 p.m., and the men were fed later after The Store closed at 7



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p.m. weekdays, after 9 p.m. Fridays. They stayed open late on Fridays to serve New Yorkers coming in on the late train. My father walked home with a canvas money bag every night, plopped it on the mantel, and was never mugged or were we robbed. We never locked our doors.

We didn't lack for food, having a grocery store – but we ate from a lot of dented cans and had the gone-by vegetables. During the war, Daddy and our butcher would go to New York to buy meat – including black market meat – we didn't ask what it was. We would get calls from New Yorkers on weekends, looking for meat. My dad would call Mother and ask if she had put the roast in the oven yet. If not, it was re-wrapped and one of us would run it up to The Store so that Oscar and Ione Schwartz had Sunday dinner! Local farmers provided eggs (another of my jobs at The Store was to weigh eggs and box them according to size). It was feast or famine with eggs, depending on the hens' production. Extra eggs were stored at home in a stone crock filled with water glass – sodium silicate (I had to look that up on the internet!) – which was a slimy mass of gelatinous goo that could preserve eggs up to three years, but were used primarily for baking. How I hated to go down cellar, fish around in that stuff, and bring eggs up to the kitchen!

Lots of folks raised chickens; chicken manure was fine fertilizer for the victory gardens most of us had during the war. (May I never eat Swiss chard again!) Miss Sault and Miss Tracy lived across the street from us for a while, and the neighborhood children delighted in watching a chicken being decapitated and then running around the yard literally “like a chicken with its head cut off”! Butchering hogs, however, was not so amusing. The Caseys raised hogs in the McBee barns (now behind the Fife 'n Drum), and I'll never forget the smell of the milky, musky slop they were fed everyday.

Kent had a ration board, headquartered in a small building (now gone) between the Kent Inn (now Patco) and The Swift House. I don't remember much about it, as the ration books and stamps were handled in the office at The Store.

Even then, the fire department was a vital part of the community. My dad served as chief for a while, and everyone would turn out for fires. The worst ones were barn fires, as volunteers tried to get the cattle out of the burning barn. Templeton's barn, Howland's barn on Geer Mountain Road, and the Kent School barn all burned. Kent Center School burned in 1956, after I had been shuffled off to Northfield School for Girls, and the students were parceled out into spaces all over town until it was rebuilt. My father wrote a History of the Kent Fire Department, which he read at the dedication of the then-new firehouse behind the library in 1952. That building cost \$17,000, totally paid by the Kent Fire Association. Of course, there were no minimum wage laws to contend with, and most of the labor was voluntary. Building materials were supplied by local businesses at wholesale cost.

Civil Defense in Kent during the war was a model of efficiency, its plane-spotting post even making it to the cover of Life Magazine. Charlotte Lindsey, co-author of “One Small Town in World War II”, will be presenting a program on our Civil Defense on November 21 at the Town Hall. We hope you can attend, and recommend that you buy the book as well from the Historical Society. It's a pretty amazing story.

Growing up in Kent was probably the best experience a child could have; it could be described as idyllic. Families were intact, neighbor looked out for neighbor, drugs and crime were not problems. Every religion and political view and life style was accepted – with a population of about 1200, we all had to stick together! Bottom line: I am eternally grateful to have been brought up here, among people who cared about each other; to have gotten a good basic education at Kent Center School; and I remain grateful that I could bring my children up in the same community. The work I have done over the years at Town Hall - (I was at the top of the ticket as a Selectman, and now I am at the bottom of the ticket as a member of the Sewer Commission! – and held almost every post in between) – was most rewarding. Volunteering also has its rewards – my mother was a founder of the Kent Historical Society, and I love following in her footsteps. I have been a witness to Kent's evolving from a small, tight-knit farming community of 1200 to a town of over 3,000 where I barely know anyone in the IGA on weekends. But that's fine – those new people have breathed new life into Kent.

In short, it doesn't get much better than that!

*The previous installments of Susi's talk appeared in the December 2011, May 2012 and August 2012 newsletters. Copies are available at the KHS office, and will soon be on our website.*

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## GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the new President of the Kent Historical Society, I wanted to introduce myself to those who might not know me as well as introduce the newest trustees.

I joined the KHS Board in March, hoping to add my talents to the mix of wonderfully creative people that are leading this organization. I bring to this new role a background in volunteering for other non-profits in town, including the Kent Volunteer Fire Department, the First Congregational Church of Kent, the Kent Children's Center and the Girl Scouts. I've also been employed at South Kent School for 16 years in a variety of capacities and am currently a teacher and the librarian. Many of you may know my role as a reporter, as I'm currently a part-time correspondent covering Kent for the *Republican-American* newspaper. My interest in the town's history began back in the late 1980s when I was the editor of The Kent GTD and I used to love poring over the old issues of the newspaper that were stored in our office, located above the old Stroble Bakery. Those issues are now safely stored in the KHS archives. 2013 was an exciting year to join the board and I was part of the Steering Committee that organized the George Laurence Nelson events. We accomplished much and I'm looking forward to how much we'll be doing in 2014.

The newest members of the board joining the organization are:

**Tom Sebring**, who lives atop Skiff Mountain, brings his wealth of knowledge and experience in leading large fundraising efforts for a number of area non-profits, including Marvelwood School, Greenwoods Counseling and others. He has lived in Kent since 1981 and is retired from a career as a retail buyer and a wholesale supplier.

**Mike Everett**, who lives in Kent Hollow, brings his extensive experience as a planner and landscape and architect, as well as an artist. He is the author of the Kent Town Character Study of 1990 and its recent update. He has a deep interest in historical buildings and the preservation of these structures.

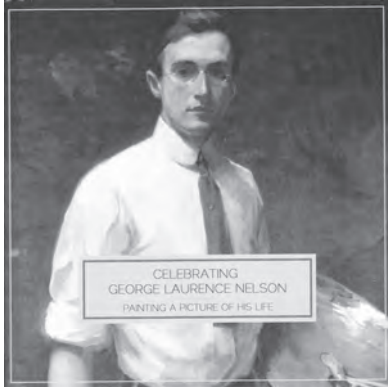
**Nancy Schaefer**, who is a resident of Brown Road in South Kent, brings her knowledge of costumes from her work on Broadway in New York, as well as keen organizational skills from her work backstage. She has been a volunteer working with the KHS collections and we look forward to all the skills she offers the organization. She is interested in exploring the history of her adopted town of Kent.

**Patricia Case**, a resident of Kent for the past 43 years, has a strong interest in the history of the town. She lived at South Kent School for over 10 years, was employed by Kent School for 29 years and now lives on Skiff Mountain, where family connections are a large part of the town's history.

We are thrilled to have all of these new members joining us. The board also acknowledges the efforts of several board members who have decided to step down, including **Susi Williams** (who is saluted on a nearby page), **Pam Crawford Irving**, **Aija Gibson** and **Allan Priaulx**. We thank them all for their contributions!

The current board has four officers and 10 members. The names are all listed on the back page. Please don't hesitate to contact me at [worthingtonl@kenthistoricalsociety.org](mailto:worthingtonl@kenthistoricalsociety.org) with any suggestions or questions about the KHS board.

- **Lynn Mellis Worthington**



## A WONDERFUL WEEKEND!

by Lynn Mellis Worthington

“Celebrating George Laurence Nelson: Painting a Picture of his life” was truly a town-wide event that was observed Nov. 2-3, 2013. The fundraising and awareness-raising dinner was hosted at the Fife 'n Drum Restaurant, featuring many pieces of Nelson's original artwork on the walls temporarily replacing the art of Eric Sloane and David Armstrong. Guest speaker Stephanie Plunkett, Deputy Director and chief curator of the Norman Rockwell Museum, shared some of the similarities between the two artists, including the fact that they died the same year, 1978, Nelson at age

91 and Rockwell at age 84. They both chose rural areas to do their artwork and helped their towns foster an economy based on creativity, Plunkett said.

The highlight of the evening was an auction of two original oil paintings and a giclee print of Nelson's work. Celebrity auctioneer Brooks Atwood, who was on the HGTV Design Star television show, dazzled the crowd with his humor as he coaxed higher and higher bids on the artwork. Nelson artwork was on display in several of the town's galleries and stores for several days leading up to the celebration.

It was a jam-packed weekend with a number of events. A large crowd of visitors went to the Kent Community House to view the student art show on Saturday and Sunday afternoons that featured artwork from students at all five schools - Kent Center School, Housatonic Valley Regional High School, Marvelwood School, Kent School and South Kent School. Sixty four works were on display, all selected by each school's art teacher. Many of the young artists attended and enjoyed pointing out their work to their parents. There were also a dozen adult artists' works on display in the Swift House from members of the Kent Art Association.

KHS also featured a talk during the weekend by restoration expert Chris Naples at The Good Gallery, owned by Board member Tim Good. Mr. Naples showed damaged images by artists such as Picasso, with water stains and brown tints, but almost miraculously he has been able to restore them to look pristine. He also examined and talked about one piece by GLN and one by Carl Hirschberg that are in the collection and in need of repair and restoration.

NOTE: The image above is the cover of a new edition of our old *New Life For Old Timber*. It has new chapters, color photos and explanatory footnotes. Titled *Celebrating George Laurence Nelson: Painting a Picture of His Life*, it sells for \$30 and is available at the KHS office on Studio Hill Road.

## Calendar of Some Events For 2014

**Saturday, February 8th, 2PM at Kent Town Hall:** “Connecticut at Work; A Discussion of the Vanished Iron Industry in Kent”. To be followed by a tour of the grounds of the former Kent Iron Co.

**Sunday, March 16th, 2PM at Kent Town Hall:** Sunday Series program with historic entertainer Tom Hooker Hanford. “Fiddle Dee Dee, Children’s Folk Songs of Old New England” will entertain us all.

**Sunday, May 18th, 2PM at Kent Town Hall:** Sunday Series program honoring our mothers. Details will be announced soon.

**July and August at Seven Hearths:** Summer long exhibit about the iron industry and its impact on the development on the town of Kent in the 19th century.

**Sunday, Sept. 21st, 2PM at Kent Town Hall:** Sunday Series lecture. Subject farming, speaker TBD.

**Sunday, Nov. 16th, 2PM at Kent Town Hall:** State Historian Walter Woodward will present *New England’s Other Witch Hunt*, about the little known story of Connecticut’s “witches.”

For further information call our office at 860-927-4587, email [info@kenthistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@kenthistoricalsociety.org), find us on Facebook at Kent Historical Society or check our website [www.kenthistoricalsociety.org](http://www.kenthistoricalsociety.org)

## Kent Historical Society

10 Studio Hill Road, PO Box 651, Kent, CT 06757  
860-927-4587 info@kenthistoricalsociety.org  
www.kenthistoricalsociety.org

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**Hours** at Tallman House at 10 Studio Hill Road: Tuesdays 9 AM  
to Noon, Fridays 1 to 4 PM, or by appointment  
This newsletter was designed by Lynne Hicks, compiled by Marge Smith  
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## Kent Quiz

### Where was the Methodist Church ?

**Answer to the last quiz:** (What Kent family has lived here in the same house since it was built before the Revolutionary War?) The Skiff family has lived in the ancient Skiff house on top of Skiff Mountain since it was built at some point between 1761 and 1766 (the date carved into the chimney). Margaret (Skiff) Gunn Kane passed away a year ago. The first Skiff, Nathan, probably built the one room schoolhouse up there. It remained in the Skiff family until deeded to the KHS in 1972 by Margaret's mother, Pauline Skiff Gunn. Margaret's daughter, Dr. Katherine Skiff Kane, lives in a newer old one room schoolhouse between the original one and the family homestead.

## Kent Historical Society

PO Box 651  
Kent, CT 06757



## Kent Historical Society MEMBERSHIP & VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

\_\_\_ Individual \$20 \_\_\_ Family & Sustaining \$35 \_\_\_ Patron \$100  
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*Here's a little extra for the Seven Hearths restoration projects* \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Make Checks payable to: **The Kent Historical Society**, PO Box 651, Kent, CT 06757

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SOCIETY ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Volunteer interest (please circle): Archives Host/Hostess Programs Other \_\_\_\_\_