



# Fall 2010 Newsletter

## HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

ALL ARE AVAILABLE  
ON OUR WEBSITE OR  
BY PHONE:  
860-678-7621

- **BOOKS :**

**Avon, Connecticut** by Mary-Frances Mackie, 1988, \$22.00

**Growing Up in Old Avon Center** by Bill Goralski, 1988, \$10.00

**Images of America—Avon** by Nora Howard, 2000, \$20.00

**A is for Avon** by Jan Brennan & her students, 2009, \$10.00

**Avon (Acadia Press Then and Now series)** by Peter Wright, 2010, \$22.00 (available early December)

- **NOTECARDS—5 per package \$3.00:**

Pen & ink images of Pine Grove Schoolhouse, Living Museum, & Derrin House

- **PRINTS suitable for framing:**

**1869 map of Avon**, \$5.00

**Farmington Canal** (pen & ink), \$3.00

**School House No. 3** (Living Museum), \$3.00

**Various Avon sites**, \$5.00

- **CAT's MEOW wooden bookshelf blocks \$12.00 each:**

**Farmington Canal**

**Pine Grove Schoolhouse**

**Charles Miller House** (Italinate) located on Waterville Road

- **Oval AVON car decals, \$3.00 each**

## President's Message

Welcome to a beautiful time of the year, when the leaves turn colors and make our landscapes come alive! This creates a sense of excitement because all kinds of activities seem to dominate our lives. So, too, has the Avon Historical Society had one of the busiest falls in history. Not only did we have a booth at Avon Day, but we held an Open House at the Pine Grove Schoolhouse. Also, we presented a lecture illustrating the medicinal practices used during the Civil War; we held a wine and cheese reception for the owners of historic homes in Avon; and we sold tickets and held our third annual Cow Chip Raffle at Simmons Family Farm. In addition, we sent out the membership renewals, as well as holding a mini-membership drive, targeting local businesses as corporate members. We are on the go like never before because of the wonderful commit-

ment of our Board of Directors and several new members who have volunteered with us at these events. We are a team and it shows!

Also of note is Society Board member Peter Wright's new book, which is arriving early in December. Entitled **Avon** it is part of Acadia Press's series of "Then and Now" books. Looking like Nora Howard's photograph book, Peter has photos of "Old Avon" alongside photos of "Avon Today." It is quite exciting to have this arrive in time for holiday gift-giving, so we encourage you to contact us now to get your autographed copy as soon as it arrives!

*Terri Wilson, President*

## MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

### FRIENDLY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

Memberships were mailed in July for 2011. If you have returned your renewals, thank you. If you have not, please send them along. Also, we are trying to save dollars and

trees; therefore, please give us your e-mail address for the newsletters and anything else of interest you may want to see. If you did not receive your reminder, please let us know. To see fees, please visit our website at: [www.avonhistoricalsociety.org/Join\\_AHS.htm](http://www.avonhistoricalsociety.org/Join_AHS.htm). Thanks!

## AVON DAY and PGS Open House

This year Avon Day was quite a success! I want to thank all the volunteers who made it happen: Board Members—Wendy Zacchera, Krystyn Hastings-Silver, Jim Putnam, Glenn Lawrence, Liz Neff, Rachel Neuhoff; Society Members - Moira Chubb, Paul Kramer, Pam Barber, Ellen Clarke, Dennis Dix and Barbara Zuras. We sold a record number of Cow Chip Raffle tickets thanks to Dennis, who took it upon himself to go around to the corporate booths because those volunteers couldn't come to our booth.

We had many visitors to our booth who were very interested in our latest acquisition from Anthony O'Neill, pictures from "Old Avon Center," which we had photographed in its entirety and mounted for display at the Living Museum. Please drop in and see it; it's quite interesting.

*Submitted by Pam Fahey, Avon Day Committee Chair*

Also on Avon Day, we held an Open House at the Pine Grove Schoolhouse to celebrate the exterior renovation and to provide a time for the public to visit on a Saturday. Special thanks to

Ben Isaacson who was there all day, to Jeannie Parker who gave tours, and to Jim Putnam who cleaned out the outhouse and helped Ben establish boundaries for parking. We also want to thank Douglas Thompson who replaced the spire on top of the entrance, as well as the Town of Avon for working with the Society to fix some of the siding around the exterior, for removing a dead tree, and for painting the flag pole to match the freshly painted exterior! All in all, it was a good day and we thank the 60 visitors who stopped by to say hello.

## Historic Home Owners Event



Although it was a rainy and cold early fall day, it didn't dampen the spirits of the over 25 homeowners who came together at the invitation of the Historical Society on September 27th to view or to create a file of their historic home. In partnership with the Avon Free Public Library's Marian Hunter History Room, those present were able to view files in existence or to start one for their home! A few of the homeowners had never been to the History Room be-

fore and they were surprised to see what it contained. History Room volunteers, Helen Muszynski, Ann Mains, Carol Dunn and Ann Emerson were there to greet everyone and pull out files, deeds and maps. Some attendees met old friends and many made new ones because everyone there had one thing in common—love for old homes and history! If you have a historic home or want to learn more about any historic building in town, the Marian Hunter History Room is the place to be. They are open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00-4:00pm.

## Myth, Maggots, Minie Balls, Gangrene and Gory A Civil War Medical Program

Did you know that over 3,000 women served as nurses in the American Civil War? Mostly untrained volunteers, they had to pass muster before they were accepted—no hoop skirts (although a lady was considered risqué without one, a hoop would not allow women to circumnavigate the hospital beds) and no young, pretty faces (middle-aged plain was just fine). These and other interesting facts were part of the lec-

ture entitled "Myth, Maggots, Minie Balls, Gangrene and Gory—A Civil War Medical Program" presented by Carolyn Ivanoff, educator and noted Civil War Historian, on October 7, at the Avon Free Public Library. Ms. Ivanoff dedicated her lecture to these women, many of whom died from either the diseases they contracted in the hospitals or from the supposed cures for the diseases. Many so-called "medicines" contained opium,

morphine, lead, and mercury. The soldiers called the nurses "Angels of the Battlefield." Their dedication and courage saved many wounded men. One of these nurses, Clara Barton, would start the National Red Cross and other women would be accepted into the medical professions as nurses and, eventually, as doctors.

*Submitted by Liz Neff, Board member*

### 3rd Annual Cow Chip Raffle - a "mooving" event

The Avon Historical Society's 3rd Annual Cow Chip Raffle held on October 16th was a site to behold. Tullulah, Clementine and Reilly were escorted by the Simmons family and staff to be the stars of the show! Over 50 were in attendance which was our best ever! It took only 45 minutes for the first cow to start the process and the remaining two were not far behind! Winners were Paul Kramer, Karon Zelman, and Carl Candels. Afterwards, three members of the Society Board of Di-



rectors - Len Tolisano, Glenn Lawrence and Ben Isaacson (in that order in the photo), who attended in

tuxedos, posed with the "ladies" for a memorable photo. The Society thanks the Simmons Family for once again hosting the annual event and the cows for providing the entertainment; the Town of Avon Public Works staff who lined the field in squares and erected the fencing; and the many residents and others who bought tickets, helped sell tickets or just came by to enjoy the fun. Organizers Sharon Genovese and Mary Harrop thank everyone for making this third annual event a huge success!

### Barns in Avon on website for all to see!

Thanks to the labor of love for Society Board Member, Liz Neff, 55 barns located in Avon are now available for viewing on the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation's website. Started several years ago, the CT Trust asked any residents or historical societies to create an inventory of these structures that are rapidly disappearing from our landscape. Liz took it upon herself to scan the barn photographs of town resident, Lynn Mauro. Liz is now photographing and listing the other barns that

she has found; there may be even more than these to add! Who knew??? To view the survey and list to date, please visit [www.connecticutbarns.org/survey](http://www.connecticutbarns.org/survey). There is a drop down list of towns that have barns listed. Click on Avon and you will see what has been posted to date! This is a work in progress, so check back from time to time to see what has been added. THANKS LIZ for working on this project bringing to light the many beautiful structures we have in our town!



### VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU'S

Late this summer we were gifted with a very unique item. Anthony O'Neill donated a large poster board that has been hanging for over 50 years on the wall at the Avon Water Company. It contains photos and postcards (some from as far back as 1880) of Avon Center. In the middle of the board is a hand-drawn outline of Avon Center (noting roads and landmarks) with arrows going to the postcards and photos that surround the edges, identifying their locations in town. Due to the fragile condition of the board, we had Moto Photo photograph it and mounted it for display at Avon Day in the Society's booth. Photographic reproductions of various sizes are available through the Society, suitable for framing or mounting.

Another unique gift of a large (17"x18") book entitled *King's Illustrated Portfolio of Our Country*, published in 1906, was donated by Hunter Neal. It has 50 pages of text with a dozen full color pull out posters (34"x36") illustrating topics such as "US Presidents," "Immigration in the US," "Churches of the US," and more.

Thanks to a targeted membership campaign this summer, we are pleased to welcome the following new Corporate Members to the Avon Historical Society:

**daCapo's Restaurant**  
**Northwest Community Bank**  
**Glenn Lawrence of Coldwell Banker**  
**Carmon Funeral Home**  
**People's Bank**



**Avon Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 448**  
**Avon, CT 06001**  
**860-678-7621**  
**ahs.mail.1830@sbcglobal.net**  
**www.avonhistoricalsociety.org**

**The Mission of the Avon Historical Society, founded in 1974, is to identify, collect, preserve, utilize, publish, display and promote the history and heritage of Avon.**

Officers:

Terri Wilson, President  
Pam Fahey, Vice President  
Wendy Zacchera, Secretary  
Monte Hopper, Treasurer

Directors:

Ben Isaacson  
Glenn Lawrence  
Liz Neff  
Rachel Neuhoff  
Jim Putnam  
Krystyn Silver  
Len Tolisano  
Peter Wright

The Society congratulates longtime member and local celebrity, Carl Candels, for being named Avon Citizen of the Year 2010 by the Unico of Avon. Well deserved!

## Miscellaneous News & Future Events

The Avon Historical Society participated in the Avon Newcomer's "Welcome Event" early in September. Thanks to Jeannie Parker and Barbara Zuras who represented the Society and who spoke and met with the more than 30 new residents who attended!

This year marks the 65th anniversary of Avon's VFW Post 3272. In recognition of this event, the Post has created a commemorative booklet in which the Society has placed an ad congratulating them on their birthday. Later this year, our local veterans will submit the written remembrances of their wartime service to the Society for inclusion in Marian Hunter History Room of the Avon Free Public Library.

The Avon Historical Society and the Avon Land Trust have been talking about sponsoring a joint project in 2011. Since the mission of the ALT is to get people outside to enjoy the use of its land; and the Society's mission is to promote our local history, we thought a geocaching event bringing people to our historic sites and their open spaces would be appropriate. Geocaching is a worldwide treasure hunt that sends people to a particular spot where a "cache" of goodies can be found. For more information, visit:

**[www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com)**

**SAVE THE DATE**—Tuesday, February 8, 2011, for a talk at 7:30pm entitled "The Shady Art of Silhouettes" by Joy Ruskin Hanes of Old Lyme, CT, who will cover the history of sil-

houette cutting and painting from the 18th Century to the present. Watch for more details in our winter newsletter and local press. In the Spring of 2011, Joy and her husband, Lee, will return to run an appraisal clinic for select decorative arts. This will be a fundraiser for the Society.

The Farmington Valley Visitors Association has announced a second Barn Tour for April 2011. This unique event brings people to various barns in the Valley and gives them a chance to learn about these vanishing buildings. A lunch and bus transportation is provided. Watch our Winter newsletter for more details as they become available.