



# Summer Newsletter

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Reminder**— The Living Museum, Pine Grove School house and the Derrin House are open for the summer from 2pm-4pm Sundays through September.
- **AVON DAY**—Sept. 25—stop by our booth and visit the Open House at Pine Grove School House to see the exterior renovation from 12pm-5pm
- Talk on “**Civil War Medicine (Myth, Maggots, Mini Balls, Gangrene & Glory)**” will be presented by historian Carolyn Ivanoff- Oct. 7 at 7:30pm at Library
- **Cow Chip Raffle**— Oct. 16 starting at 2:00pm—see page 4 for details

## President's Message

Welcome to Summer and to our new and improved newsletter! We hope you like it.

Our goal in creating a new format is to encourage our members to allow us to e-mail it to them in order to save us printing and postage costs. Like many of you, we are looking for ways to cut expenses yet still be able to produce an enjoyable, informative, easy-to-read newsletter that can be e-mailed or seen on our website and this will aide in that goal. If you are willing, please send us an e-mail at: [ahs.mail.1830@sbcgloblal.net](mailto:ahs.mail.1830@sbcgloblal.net) with the address you prefer us to send it to and from now on you will see a quarterly newsletter full

of great information and tidbits of local history. If you wish to continue to receive this by mail, you do not need to do anything. We will simply mail it every quarter.

It has been a very busy spring at the Society. The most important action was a decision by the members of the Avon Historical Society at our Annual Meeting in April to add the Horse Guard Barn on West Avon Road to the existing Derrin House lease from the State of Connecticut Department of the Military. (see p. 3) As many of you already know, we are well into the selling of raffle tickets for our annual Cow Chip Raffle fundraiser to be held

on Saturday, October 16 starting at 2pm on the grounds of the Simmons Family Farm on Tillotson Road. More details are contained in this newsletter. (see p. 4)

Personally, I would like to thank Ruth Woodford, who stepped down from our Board of Directors this Spring, for her many years of service to the Society in various elected positions and organizer of events and scheduling of greeters at the Living Museum. We look forward to her continued presence at our events. Thanks Ruth! Once again, I hope you enjoy our new “look” and will agree to receive it by e-mail from now on.  
Terri Wilson, President

## Membership Update

The annual membership drive has begun! Letters and renewals are about to be mailed, but there is more. The Society Board of Directors has made a decision to reach out to our neighbors and friends who live in homes built prior to 1890 with a free one-year

membership as a way of showing our appreciation for their taking the time to care for a local historic property. We also would like to have these homeowners participate with us in our events and fundraisers as it is a “natural” extension of their interest in his-

tory. As always the benefit of membership in the Avon Historical Society means that you are part of keeping history alive for future generations and for that, we are very thankful. Please respond promptly to the renewal when it arrives in your mailbox. Thanks.

## D e r r i n   H o u s e   D o n a t i o n s

### Donations to the Derrin House this Spring:

**Maher's Paint & Wallpaper LLC**, Avon, for a donation of the historical red paint for the exterior.

**Garden Club of Avon** for a donation for the purchase of historically accurate herbs and medicinal plants for the raised garden beds.

**Moore's Sawmill**, Bloomfield, for donation of wooden planks for the building of the raised garden beds.

**Lee and Terri Wilson**, Avon, for donating a large amount of power and hand tools, nails, screws, paint, stain, etc. for its continued renovation.

**Bristol Community Renewal Team** AIC group who has spent hundreds of hours for over 15 years on its repair and restoration. We could not have done it without them!

**Mrs. Sue Whitney**, Avon, for many kitchen implements from the early 20th century for display in the Hoosier Cabinet. She also

donated a child's chair which was her father's.

**Sue Jansen & Jack Broitman**, Avon, for a donation of a rope bed used by a farm hand at Woodford Farm in the early 20th century. It is on display in the morning room on the first floor.

**Jim Harrop**, Avon, for a lawn mower to be used on the grounds.

Several Board members are assisting with projects in and around the building. Please stop by this summer to see the progress!

### A t t e n t i o n   g r e e n   t h u m b s   — j o i n   t h e   " G G G "



This spring saw the first subcommittee of the Board formed just to focus on the gardens and grounds around our properties. The Gardens and Grounds Group (GGG) was the brainchild of previous Board member Lesley Mancini who, with several Board members and other volunteers, stepped forward to help

plan and provide for the beautification of our grounds. Another Board member, Peter Wright, lent his architectural skill to produce accurate drawings of the grounds and this was very helpful in planning future plantings. The Board can now work collectively on how the grounds are to be maintained and working with the Town of Avon Public

Works in a collective way, you will begin to see each property take on a new look. As many of you with green thumbs know, this takes time and effort. If anyone would like to join the GGG, please contact the Society and as each project moves forward, you will be notified and offered a chance to participate. Thanks!



Did you know the French and Indian War is considered the first true "world war?" Why? Because at the time the War broke out in the Colonies, France and Britain were involved in a raging Seven Years War on almost every continent of the world! We learned this and other interesting facts from Sarah Melcher of Torrington

who presented "Voices of Connecticut in the French & Indian War" in May at the Avon Free Public Library. Sarah shared with us how it may have been a young George Washington who fired the first shot that started one of the many battles fought in upstate New York, western Pennsylvania and eastern Canada—all along the major rivers in the northeast. Connecticut's role was one of supplying men who

traveled a distance to either fight or be part of the supply team. Their diaries, letters and journals are very descriptive and Sarah read from many of them. They expressed desire for independence and freedom in the new land. It was a well presented program and one that left many of us wanting to learn more.

## Sandstones and monuments recalling the Farmington Canal

Have you ever noticed a red sandstone standing vertically outside of the entrance of daCapo's Restaurant's in Old Avon Village? If you haven't, look next time because there is a real meaning for it being there. Back around the Bicentennial of the United States, 1976, the former owner of the tire store in the Village, Norm Southergill, placed the stone there to show the crossing of the Farmington Canal as it ran parallel with Old Farms Road, across what is now

Route 44, and carried on right through the property of the Living Museum parallel to what is now Route 10. Thanks to a chance meeting and learning this, the Society decided to complete the story and place a similar stone on the grounds of the Living Museum so residents and visitors can visualize the area it crossed and how it meandered through the center of Avon. Thanks to a donation of a similar red sandstone from Ann August in Old Avon Village and with the help of the Town of Avon Public Works Depart-

ment and with a donation of plaques from Mystic River Foundry, owned by a former resident of Avon, Sher Eastwood, the Society will dedicate both stones this Fall to highlight the story of the Farmington Canal to those who see those two stones.

This idea has been in the background for some time, but it took several phone calls and creative thinking to bring it all together. The Society thanks all those who worked on this effort.

## First Co. Governor's Horse Guard Barn, 232 West Avon Road

In April of this year, members of the Avon Historical Society voted to accept the proposal by the State of Connecticut Military Department to extend the lease on the Derrin House to include the First Co. Governor's Horse Guard barn on West Avon Road for restoration by the Society. Krystyn Silver, restoration professional, gave

an overview of the property as it stands today. After much debate, the members present voted to accept the proposal. The barn is a typical example of a late 19th c. New England Gable Entry Bank barn. Its architectural significance lies in the timber frame construction built according to "square rule" using a circular saw. It

retains much of its original woodwork and foundation. This summer the Society is working on the terms of the lease with the State and hopes to have it signed by Fall. The Society will then issue a plan for restoration that is expected to take many years of fundraising and planning. Stay tuned as we move forward.



## VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU



One year ago the **Farmington Bank Foundation** provided a very generous grant to remediate the lead from the exterior of the Pine Grove School House. This spring the grant was also able to fund repainting while members of the Society's Board painted the trim. We hope you agree, it looks spectacular! Please celebrate with us at an Open House for the Pine Grove School House on Avon Day, Saturday, September 25 from 1:00—5:00pm.

This Spring **Northwest Community Bank** provided a grant to print our new brochures for the Society and our three properties. The Bank has been using the proceeds from the sales of their 150th anniversary book to provide grants to local historical organizations in the five towns they serve. We are the lucky group in Avon and we are very grateful.



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  
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The Society congratulates Wendy Zacchera for her state award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars for Excellence in Teaching at the Elementary School Level. Way to go Wendy!

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR—COW CHIP RAFFLE COMING IN OCTOBER

Bring your friends and family to the Society's 3rd Annual Cow Chip Raffle on Saturday, October 16 beginning at 2:00pm at the Simmons Family Farm on Tillotson Road. We promise you won't be disappointed!



What is a Cow Chip Raffle? Here's how it works: a grid of 750 squares will be painted on a field across the street from the Simmons' Family Farm. Each square will be assigned a

number and will be 2 feet by 2 feet. Three well-fed cows will be let loose on the grid to, well, let their chips fall where they may. Prizes will be based upon the order in which the chips fall and upon the number of the square where the cow leaves its chip. The ticket holder of the numbered square where the first cow chip falls will be the first prize winner of \$250; the ticket holder of the numbered square where the second cow chip falls will be the second prize winner of \$100; and the ticket holder of the numbered square where the third cow chip falls will be the third prize winner of \$50.

Tickets are just \$5 each and can be bought in several ways:

1. Leaving a message on the So-

ciety answering machine or send an e-mail (see above for contact info)

2. Outside Walmart on Aug. 28 and Sept. 18 from 10am – 2pm
3. The Society's booth on Avon Day!

Or simply call Sharon Genovese at 860-677-4690 and she will be sure to get you a ticket or two!

**JOIN US!**  
**OCTOBER 16 2:00pm**  
**Simmons Family Farm**  
**Tillotson Road**