

HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

June 2014

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Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations

StEPs-CT Goal: Building Stronger Museums... Together

If you have attended any of the Harwinton Historical Society's regular membership or Board of Directors meetings in the past two years, you have probably heard someone mention the **StEPs-CT** program. StEPs is an acronym for "Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations."

In 2012, the Connecticut League of History Organizations and the Connecticut Humanities Council introduced **StEPs-CT**— a new integrated program of training, mentoring, and grant funding for smaller Connecticut museums, historical societies, and other cultural organizations. The Harwinton Historical Society, under the leadership of then President Richard Pacholski, signed up to participate.

StEPs-CT is designed to help organizations, especially small ones, to clearly identify and document their strengths and find solutions for those areas needing improvement. A core group of six individuals agreed to participate in the initiative for Harwinton. They were: Richard Pacholski, Candace Jones-Pacholski, Carol Kearns, Harry Schuh, Dennis Andrews and Bonnie Andrews. During the months that followed, several others participated in one or more of the classes including Mary English and Roger Plaskett.

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OFFICERS:

President: Eleanor Woike
Vice Pres.: Nancy Schnyer
Secretary: Loda Sheehan
Treasurer: Harry Schuh

DIRECTORS:

Luella Bartes
James Curtis
Carol Kearns
Candace Jones-Pacholski
Elaine Sederquist
Open

CURATORS:

Beverly Mosher
Bonnie Andrews

BUILDINGS:

Dennis Andrews

Annual Second Grade Field Trip

On Monday, June 2, about 90 second grade students, their teachers and chaperones from the Harwinton Consolidated School will visit the First District restored one-room schoolhouse and the barn museum.

This is an annual field trip sponsored by the school's parents' organization. Each class will spend a half hour in the barn and a half hour in the schoolhouse where they will get an overview of Harwinton's history.

Several historical society members have volunteered to serve as tour guides this year under the leadership of Corinne and Jim Curtis.

Anyone interested in helping with this event in the future should contact Bonnie Andrews or Corinne Curtis.

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The curriculum was developed by the American Association for State and Local History. The Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations was launched by AASLH in 2009 and to date has helped nearly 300 institutions nationwide begin taking “steps” to plan and implement permanent, positive change. The goal was to work to achieve certificates in six areas of museum practice (three during year one and three during year two). The areas of museum practice that the program addressed were:

Year One: Mission, Vision and Governance / Audience / Management

Year Two: Stewardship of Historic Structures and Landscapes / Stewardship of Collections / Interpretation

From 2012 to 2013 and extending into 2014, Harwinton’s core group of six attended meetings and workshops and created documents related to each of the six areas. Workshops and lectures helped guide the group to develop goals and measurements for process improvement. Most of the workshops were held in Middletown, but some were scheduled at other historical societies and institutions. A mentor was assigned to each organization to serve as a guide and to help the team meet goals and resolve concerns and answer questions.

Participation in **StEPs** is helping us to discover tangible results, including:

- Improved policies and practices
- Clearer direction for future improvement
- Meaningful progress – finding ways to identify, articulate, and measure our organization’s accomplishments
- Increased credibility with funders, the community, and stakeholders
- Education of and awareness of standards for our many types of volunteers, members of our Board of Directors, audiences of our programs and museums, and our community
- Providing a valuable opportunity to make the case for improvement to stakeholders for staffing, training, materials, and equipment

StEPs rewards each participating organization with certificates each time it reports back to AASLH that it has achieved all of the Basic (Bronze), Good (Silver) or Better (Gold) performance indicators in one of the six workbook sections.

The Harwinton Historical Society has completed all objectives for the “Bronze” level and has recently submitted the necessary paper work for that level. In addition, the Society has completed many of the objectives of the “Silver” level and a few goals in the “Gold” category.

As the **StEPs** program points out, “stronger organizations don’t happen overnight.” The Harwinton Historical Society is continuing to work toward meeting the basic goals of the program.

To learn more about the **StEPs** program, you may visit www.clho.org

Curator's Corner

Volunteer Mary English has been sorting and labeling books in our library collection. Some are in need of repair and others are being grouped together by category.

Mary has also offered to inventory the three books the Historical Society offers for sale.

Those books include:

“This and That” by Raymond G. Bentley (former town historian)

“Vignettes” by Lloyd Shanley (former town historian and first selectman)

“More Memories” compiled by the Historical Society.

Contact Beverly Mosher at 860-485-0610 if interested in purchasing any of these items.

- Curators Bev Mosher and Bonnie Andrews

Harwinton Historical Society Meetings

General Membership meetings are held quarterly on the fourth Monday of January, April, July and October at 6:30 p.m. at Harwinton Senior Center 209 Weingart Road. Programs and special meetings may be held in addition to those listed here.

The Board of Directors meets the third Thursday of January, April, July and October at 6:30 at Skinner House on Bentley Drive.

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Answer to May Trivia question: According to the 1914 Connecticut State Register and Manual, the population of Harwinton 100 years ago was 1,440 people. Today, Harwinton's population exceeds 5,000

A Bit of Trivia for June: The white wooden signpost on Harwinton's Center Green at the intersection of Route 4 and South Road provides the direction and distance to places such as Burlington, Hartford, Litchfield, Torrington and Plymouth. In the past, the sign post also served another purpose. What was that purpose?

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:

Saturday, June 14 is Connecticut Open House Day

Many museums throughout the state will be open to the public free of charge during this annual event. We plan to have the Historical Society's barn museum and schoolhouse open from 1 to 3 p.m., but need some people serve as hosts. If you can help, please contact Bev Mosher at 860-485-0610 or Jim Curtis at 860-485-1275. It's an easy way to participate and provide a good service to the society and the public.

NEW ! Monday, June 23, Civil War Medications and Medical Treatment

On Monday, June 23rd the Harwinton Historical Society will present a program describing the role of medicine during the Civil War. Dane and Carol Deleppo from the Hungerford Museum in Harwinton will be the featured speakers. Dane and Carol are Harwinton residents and Civil War re-enactors. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Harwinton Senior Center, 209 Weingart Road. All are invited. There will be no charge although donations are gratefully received.

Sunday, Aug. 3, 2 to 4 p.m. Annual Ice Cream Social on the grounds of the First District one-room schoolhouse.

Saturday and Sunday, Oct 4 and 5. Annual Harwinton Fair with participation by the Harwinton Historical Society.

HAPPENINGS NEARBY:

June 7 at 1 p.m. on Valley Road, Harwinton. The Jamie Kirchner Wheels and Heels Road Race will benefit the Naugatuck River Greenway, one of 100 projects across the country designed to support a nation-wide initiative called "America's Great Outdoors." Proceeds from this road race will go toward creating a handicapped access trail to the Naugatuck River and to benefit the Naugatuck River Greenway plan.

Successful Walk along Boston's Freedom Trail

Forty-three people participated in a May 9th bus trip sponsored by the Historical Society to walk the Freedom Trail in Boston. Led by UConn History Professor Dr. Karl Valois, the group stopped at a number of sites along the historic trail including the USS Constitution, the Bunker Hill Monument and museum, Old North Church, Faneuil Hall, ye olde Union Oyster House, the Boston Massacre Site and the Massachusetts State House. The weather was overcast with occasional showers but the cool temperatures were ideal for walking.