

# HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2019

Mail: PO Box 84, Harwinton, CT 06791

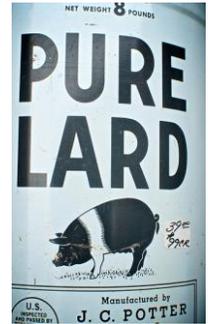
email: [harwhistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:harwhistsoc@gmail.com)

### The Barn Corner

## USING THE LARD PRESS

By David Ryan

In the Historical Society's barn museum are two wooden paddles known as a basic lard press. The paddles are connected by hinges made either of wood or leather and were used to separate liquid fat (lard) from rendered (melted down) meat scraps as it comes out of large boiling kettles once a cow, pig or sheep has been butchered. The separated fat was bagged in burlap sacks, pressed, and saved for cooking, lamp fuel, and making soap. The residue left in the burlap after pressing was called "crackling," which could be baked or added to corn bread for flavoring.



Lard (and sometimes butter) replaced oil in the paste that would become "pastry." Lard was often chosen over butter because it was less expensive. The most buttery-flavored pastry was baked and eaten by itself. Lard was the favored ingredient for making pie crust because it was not eaten by itself but was mixed with flour and filled with fruit such as apples and blueberries.

### **Reputation Tarnished**

Like most animal fats, lard's reputation was tarnished many years ago when companies suggested that hydrogenated vegetable oils (like Crisco) were healthier than traditional animal fats. In the 1990's medical establishments began linking saturated fats to heart disease, making the shunning of lard almost complete. Die-hards like my grandmother and mother-in-law (well-known for their pies which were often made for sale) swore that the use of lard in pies made for a much tastier and better-textured crust.

Lard can be found on store shelves today next to Crisco and other vegetable fats. This commercial lard is bleached and deodorized and not considered to be as good as the lard from pasture-raised animals. Also, the hydrogenated oils have also lost their good reputation. Some European countries have banned them. It is too bad that the generation of bakers who made good home-baked pies are not around to tell us what they think is best. Whether made with lard or Crisco, a piece of home-made pie is still considered good for the soul.

### **What is hydrogenated vegetable oil?**

Oils (such as vegetable, olive, sunflower) are liquids at room temperature. In the food industry, hydrogen is added to oils (in a process called hydrogenation) to make them more solid, or "spreadable." Hydrogenated oils can be sold directly as "spreads" but are also used in the food industry in the manufacture of many foodstuffs such as biscuits and cakes. Being hydrogenated helps to prolong the shelf-life of the food and maintain flavor stability.

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**OFFICERS – 2019**

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**Vice President:** Nancy Schnyer  
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**Treasurer:** Harry Schuh

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**Term Ends 2019**

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Shirley Gay

**Term Ends 2020**

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Candace Jones-Pacholski

**Term Ends 2021**

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**BUILDING SUPERVISOR**

Dennis Andrews

**OTHERS**

(non-board positions)

**HISTORIAN**

Roger Plaskett

**AUDITOR**

Marilyn Mitchell

**LEGAL COUNSEL**

Patrick Wall

**Email:**

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Harwinton Historical Society

PO Box 84

Harwinton, CT 06791

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# Thank You!

**Thank you to the following special people for their help recently:**

- **Historical Society members Andrea and Jay LaFrance for decorating the sign post in front of the First District Schoolhouse. This is the second year Andrea and Jay have contributed to the spirit of the season by volunteering for this task.**
- **Brett Stone of Brett Stone Painting and Maintenance for donating and installing a cap on the chimney of the First District Schoolhouse.**
- **All Historical Society members who answered the call to contribute cookies to the Harwinton Fire Department Auxiliary for this year's Holiday Hometown Celebration. The Auxiliary estimated that 4,500 cookies and close to 900 cups of hot chocolate were served. Empty plates and containers have been left in the town hall kitchen if anyone wants to pick them up.**
- **Dennis Andrews for hanging the wreath and putting the candles in the windows of the schoolhouse for the Christmas holiday season.**
- **All members of the Board of Directors who donated their time, talents and experience in a variety of ways during 2018 to keep the Historical Society moving forward.**
- **Town Historian Roger Plaskett for always being willing to help with questions and research.**

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**TRIVIA QUESTION:** When and by whom was the first telephone installed in Harwinton?

**Answer:** Dr. William P. Swett, who practiced in Harwinton and then in Terryville, connected Harwinton Center with Terryville by telephone some time before 1882, according to the late Raymond G. Bentley in his "History of Harwinton." The wires were strung on trees, poles and buildings with the necks of glass bottles for insulators.

## PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN PROGRAM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>



The Harwinton Historical Society will provide a program on President Ronald Reagan. It will take place at the Harwinton Library on January 6, 2019 from 2 – 4 PM. In today's polarized political environment, past American presidents – both Democrats and Republicans – have been demonized as well as exalted. Nowhere is this more clear than in the case of Ronald Reagan. Join Dr. Karl Valois of the University of Connecticut for a lively discussion of the myth and reality of Ronald Reagan.

All are invited. There is no need for registration and there will be no fee for the program although donations are gratefully accepted. February 3, 2019 will be a snow date, if necessary.

### Looking Back in History

100 years ago, the average income was \$1,697. A new car cost \$440 and a new house less than \$5,000. You could purchase a loaf of bread for 10 cents, a gallon of gas for 15 cents and a gallon of milk for 56 cents. The Dow Jones Average was 84. New inventions included the automatic toaster, crystal radio and synthetic quinine. Life expectancy was 54.4 years.

*Source: 1918 Pages of Time*

### New Year Customs

People around the world celebrate the coming of a new year in many ways. Americans enjoy the passing of the old year and the coming of a new year with special traditions including midnight kissing, fireworks and champagne toasts.

**Times Square:** As many as 1 million people gather in Times Square in New York City on the eve of the new year. Except for the World War II years 1942 and 1943, this tradition has been going on since 1907. The event ends with a countdown and lowering of a big illuminated ball. The original ball was made of wood and iron. Today, the modern ball weighs 11,875 pounds and is covered in shiny Waterford crystals that are handmade in Ireland.

**First Night:** Several U.S. cities organize alcohol-free, family-oriented First Night festivities featuring games and entertainment. People count down the last 10 seconds of the old year followed by a toast or the first kiss of the new year. Fireworks and noisemakers are intended to scare off any evil spirits

**NOTE: In spite of all of the preparations and celebrations, it is estimated that 22 percent of Americans fall asleep before midnight on New Year's Eve!**

**HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP FORM (NEW OR RENEWAL)**

The annual meeting of the Harwinton Historical Society will take place on **Sunday, January 13, 2019 at 1 p.m. the Harwinton Senior Center**, 209 Weingart Road. In case of snow, the meeting will be held on January 20th.

We will begin with pizza followed by guest speaker Ruth Shapleigh Brown of the Connecticut Gravestone Network. Ruth will provide updates on the network’s most recent activities and will answer questions.

The business meeting will focus on the future of the Historical Society including major activities, considering a permanent home for the society, increasing membership and any other topics of interest to the members.

2019 memberships are due now. Please detach and return the form below.

----- Detach and Return -----

**2019 HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name of Member (s):

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Providing an email address will help reduce the cost of postage*

Amount included (\$15 per member): \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_ Life Member \_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to the Harwinton Historical Society**

**PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 15, 2019 TO:**

**HARWINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PO BOX 84  
Harwinton, CT 06791**

**Forms may also be returned at the annual meeting**