

*THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL*

*SOCIETY NEWSLETTER*

FALL 1999

## BARN AGAIN

Hamden's heritage is in danger. **The Rectory School Barn**, at 2308 Whitney Avenue (Centerville Lumber), could be lost.

Located near the center of town, a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, boys' military school needed a barn for its purposes. The gable peaks, heavy fret work and soaring finials on this 1869 barn were the response. It is today Hamden's best example of the Gothic Victorian style.

To be saved, it must be moved. Funds have been obtained to pay for a portion of the costs. Preparations have been made to move it. Public uses for it at the new site are being considered.

**Help is needed. Now! Donations are urgently requested.**

Any donation will help. Donations of \$500 or more will be specially recognized

Send donations to:

Hamden Historical Society, Inc.  
P. O. Box 5512  
Hamden, CT 06518  
(a 501(c)(3) charitable organization)



We recognize Press Cuozzo Realtors, of 2751 Dixwell Avenue, which will contribute to the barn with a portion of each agent's commission to be matched by the Company. Final inclusion date is October 1, 1999.

## JONATHAN DICKERMAN HOUSE

ITEM ONE Over this past summer on at least three occasions, several members of the Society have joined day-long, work details at the Dickerman House on Mt. Carmel Avenue. Many thanks to Al Gorman, Bill Doheny, Terri Deshefy-Longhi, Bob Zoni, Brian Poirier, Will Doheny and John Longhi for their efforts. Special thanks for Bill Doheny's generous contribution of his earth moving equipment, without which our efforts would be greatly diminished.

Work has focused on the restoration of the Dickerman-Talmadge Barn. The basement of the barn has a wood floor and plans are afoot to install a toilet area and a kitchenette. Grounds work includes the new retaining wall and steps on the northwest corner. To put all this in perspective, we note that some of the stones put in place weigh from 500 to 900 pounds. We don't mean Pound Sterling. It is slow, painstaking work that can produce an occasional abrasion and a sore back.

On August 28, the work crew labored from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM to prepare the most visible area for hosting the Spring Glen Garden Club. In late September or early October, the Society's Stone (age) Men will return to the scene once again to work on the southwest corner wall. All hardy souls willing to help are urged to call Al Gorman at 288-0017. We are an equal-opportunity exploiter of volunteer labor. Apply early and beat the rush.

ITEM TWO On September 12, 1999, the Dickerman-Talmadge barn was the venue for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Spring Glen Garden Club. You will recall this is the wonderful group of local women who, among other fine accomplishments, grace the inner chambers of Town Hall each Thanksgiving with exquisite flower and produce

arrangements. Each year, they help Terri Deshefy-Longhi with maintenance of the Dickerman House garden. Once again we extend to that Garden Club the Society's heart-felt thanks for all they have done over the years and congratulations.

It was our pleasure to host the Spring Glen Garden Club's celebration in our modest barn. Modest did we say? An attractive chandelier glowed from the rafters, our discrete barn lighting highlighted the interior, a large Persian carpet blanketed the center of the floor and fine food with good fellowship completed the picture. Weather cooperated and the spirits of departed Dickermans and Talmadges smiled down on that day.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Rectory School Barn at 2308 Whitney Avenue remains a subject of concern. At the Society's Board meeting in early June of this year, the Board decided to give up. Four years of scratching for funds to initiate saving that barn failed. Then, after a phone call from Senator Crisco's office (D. State Senate 17<sup>th</sup> District), Brian Poirier and Bill Doheny met on June 23 to quickly fill out a simple application form. Within a week, \$30,000.00 was in the bank. On July 9, local officials, Pres. Al Gorman and owner Ozzie Roos and reporters met at the barn to announce the grant and express hope for the project.

Hope is an important word to remember. "Historic school barn to be saved" trumpeted the headline of a local newspaper article on July 14, 1999. Were it only that easy. Simply finding a contractor in the business of moving buildings was a challenge. The contractor likely to be hired, from Suffield, Connecticut, quoted us \$67,500. 30 down; 37.5 to go! That sum pays for moving, new excavation and new foundation. Is it a sure bet at this time? Absolutely no.

Al Gorman, our interim president, was elected and installed in a full, two-year term at our May 15 General Meeting. A baptism in fire was not planned, but occurred anyway. Al has performed shuttle diplomacy over the past two months that would make Middle East diplomacy pale by comparison. There were meetings with the Mayor, submissions to the Legislative Council, meetings with the Town Engineer, meeting with the purchasing agent and risk manager, submissions to the Parks & Rec Department and Arts Commission and meetings attended and planned with the Hamden Housing Authority. All that to obtain authority to move this barn over about 500+- feet of Town land.

Next one for Miracle-Worker Status is Bill Doheny. When not servicing his dental patients on Whitney Avenue, Bill managed to haunt the phone lines between himself and Senator Joe Crisco's office for months. At the moment when expectations were lowest, he succeeded and the funds arrived. The Society decided to stick its neck out on this one and commit its own funds and sweat. That decision reflects a well justified faith in Al and Bill. Thirty thousand thanks to both.

We are operating under a deadline to achieve the move this year. Though \$30,000 of state money hangs in the balance and the possibility of more next year for Phase II of this project, it is not certain that the Town will accept this barn on town property. We ask all of you and your friends to contact your Legislative Council members and members-at-large and urge them to act favorably on this project. We note with pride the efforts of our new, local newspaper, *The Hamden Journal*, a Hometown Publications Newspaper. It and committed editor Brad Durrell have given wonderful coverage to this project. Not to be forgotten, of course, is Mr. Durrell's supportive editorial of 2 weeks ago.

We acknowledge new member Shirley A. Keenan, of Hamden. Welcome Shirley.

### WEST ROCK DAY A Free Family Festival

On Saturday, October 2, 1999, from 10am to 4pm, the splendors and history of the West Rock Park will be on display. Activities include cookout, storytelling, raptor watch, exhibits and guided hikes and more. Once again your Historical Society will exhibit various aspects of our mission at the exhibition area. Tell your friends and plan to come. See you there.

### MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICE

Our thanks to Al Gorman, as President, Lois Casey, as recording secretary, Sam Becker, as treasurer, Martha Becker, as historian, and Louise Brundage, membership for their willingness to serve another two years. They have served the Society extremely well in other capacities over the years.

The position of Vice President remains open. A volunteer is needed for the position of Vice President in accordance with the By-Laws. The position does not demand a lot of time from a person. The candidate has to be a member in good standing, have an interest in the operation of the Society and be willing to participate when needed. The Board meets once a month from September to June. In the event the President cannot fulfill a particular duty, the Vice President would fill it.

A corresponding secretary is needed also. If you are interested, please send a note to Al Gorman, 270 Willow Street, Hamden 06518. Or his phone number is 288-0017.

## MORE THANKS TO THOSE WHO GIVE

To those who have so far generously donated to the Rectory School Barn Project, thank you. More recognition is planned.

To Al Gorman, who caulked and painted some rear windows on the Dickerman House, thank you.

To Bob Zoni, Al Gorman and Brian Poirier who sweltered at the Dickerman House season-opening on July 4<sup>th</sup>, thank you. Also on that day, a nice, fluffy pile of saw dust was discovered in the Dickerman barn. Cleanup was immediately followed by extermination of the unwanted, wood boring tenants.

Thanks to all those members who renewed their memberships. We appreciate the extra donation that many sent with their returns. For those who have not renewed in response to our May mailing, please do so now.

And thanks to Bill Doheny for donating the portable iron railing for the Dickerman barn double doors and to Will Doheny for the welding work involved.

And thanks to Ann Reddington, our paid and volunteer archivist in the Society Library, and her two assistants Ginnie Dowd and Kathy Jeffs.

For those interested, visit the grounds of the Dickerman House some time and view the results of hard manual labor. The stone wall and three sets of steps are all laid without power cutters and without cement.

SUPPORT YOUR  
SOCIETY.

COME TO THE  
ANNUAL ANTIQUES  
SHOW.



BRING YOUR  
FRIENDS.  
SPREAD THE WORD

38<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GIANT VALLEY ANTIQUES  
SHOW

SAT. OCT. 23 10 AM-5 PM SUN. OCT. 24  
10 AM-4 PM (Note shorter Sunday hours)

At the Miller Library-Cultural Center, 2901 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden, Ct., will be held this much appreciated annual event. Gate receipts and kitchen profits directly benefit the projects and programs of the Hamden Historical Society.

Each day, luncheon is provided at the kitchen in the Senior Center by members of the Society. We need help. Deliver to our kitchen your contributions of food/baked goods, a pound of coffee, a can of tuna or some ice cream. Donated home-made pies are especially desired. What we do not have to purchase increases our profit. You may drop off donations either Saturday or Sunday morning or when you attend the show. **BUT PLEASE**, call us **FIRST** to let us know so that we can **PLAN**.

Help us by calling Al or Betsy Gorman at 288-0017 no later than October 21, 1997 to let them know what you would like to donate.

Assistance in the kitchen is needed. We need more people during the noon rush, so if you can help, call one Al or Betsy mentioned above as soon as possible.

Tell you friends and relatives. Better yet bring them with you. Browse around and visit with the dealers. Unlike some antique shows, this one receives rave reviews for congeniality and comfortable surroundings. You might find that special Christmas or Chanukah gift. We will be selling our book, *Hamden Our Architectural Heritage*, one of our perennial best sellers and always a perfect gift for yourself and your friends, especially former Hamden residents. Our kitchen serves breakfast drinks and a delicious luncheon at modest prices, dare we say historic prices. Come join us, enjoy the day, consume some good food and meet some old friends and maybe some new ones.

BE AN ANGEL.. BELOW IS OUR POPULAR CHILI RECIPE.

Try it and make a batch for our kitchen.

2 lbs hamburger, 1 large onion  
3 or 4 garlic cloves, 2 green peppers  
1 large can of stewed tomatoes  
½ bottle chili powder, 1 tsp. oregano  
2 large cans of red kidney beans  
salt and pepper to taste, ½ bottle cumin.  
Chop onion, garlic and peppers, saute.  
Brown hamburger. Add remaining ingredients. Simmer, the longer the better.



# NEWSLETTER

THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 5512 - HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518

## 38th Annual GIANT VALLEY ANTIQUES SHOW



**OCTOBER 23rd and 24th 1999**

SATURDAY 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.  
SUNDAY 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

**MILLER LIBRARY - CULTURAL CENTER**  
2901 DIXWELL AVE. HAMDEN. CT

Admission \$3.00 With this card \$2.50 each  
FREE PARKING - REFRESHMENTS

**A BENEFIT FOR THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Sponsored by the Giant Valley Association of Antiques Dealers

