

# From The Harrison House

The Branford Historical Society Newsletter

Spring 1998, Volume 3, Issue 2

## From the President...

April 21 was Community Service Day at Branford High School. Various businesses and organizations were present to offer interested students an opportunity for community service.

Winnifred Judge and I attended, as this was a perfect opportunity for the Historical Society to participate. One of our goals for the year, you may recall, was to extend ourselves by making the community aware of the Society and all it represents and does for historic preservation in our town.

Both Winnifred and I were treated to a flood of curious students who signed up to be trained as guides, to volunteer other services or to learn about archival work. Each was genuinely interested and readily expressed their willingness to sign up.

Prior to graduation, each student needs to accumulate 40 hours of community service time, keep a journal and write a reflective essay on the experience they received.

As we left for the day, both of us were struck by the students' demeanors. What we saw truly made us feel that there are still many great young people in Branford, and that our community should be very proud of the up and coming generation.

*Bob Bescher*  
488-0100

## Archives On Our Mind...

by Pearl L. Moeller, Archivist.

Most people think of the word archives as those dusty, dull papers lying in cartons in Grandma Abigail's attic and never looked at.

Nothing could be further from the truth regarding the archives of the Branford Historical Society!

Having worked for many years in New York at the Museum of Modern Art Library, in charge of Special Collections, and seen every conceivable type of archive, I can attest that our Historical Society's holdings are anything but dull. They are a joy to behold.

Included in our collection are excellent and unique photographs (some 40 boxes) of Branford people, buildings and scenes over a wide span of history; some 15 boxes of irreplaceable original negatives; plus books, slides, diaries (some from the Civil War), daguerreotypes, extensive genealogies of Branford families, a large section of Connecticut town histories, and microfilms of local newspapers.

The Archives are well organized and in good condition due to

the hard work, foresight and knowledge of our Town Historian Jane Peterson Bouley; Marlene Palmquist, Director of the Blackstone Library, and before them, the late Betty Linsley, who organized and catalogued an enormous amount of material.

We are all excited about the upcoming transfer of our archives from the Harrison House on Main Street to the newly equipped and designated Branford Room in the beautifully renovated James Blackstone Memorial Library.

Once the holdings are in place in the Library, I look forward to working further on them with the advice of Jane and Marlene. Mrs. Mabel Kerrigan has also very kindly volunteered her assistance. As a relative newcomer to Branford, I shall value their opinions and judgment.

If you are interested in uncovering some of Branford's history, the

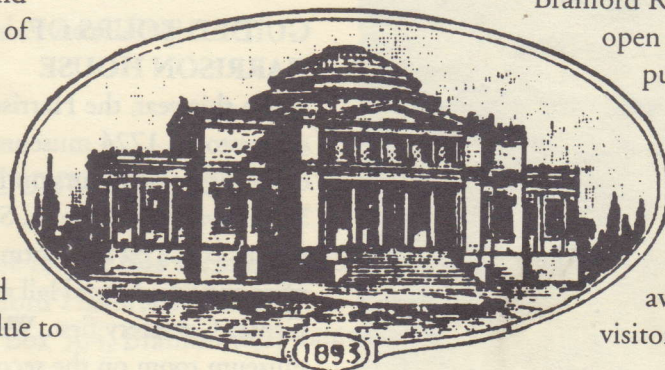
Branford Room will be open to the public by

appointment.

A veritable treasure trove

awaits

visitors!







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is a publication of the

**Branford Historical Society**  
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## Annual Dinner & Meeting

The Branford Historical Society Annual Meeting and Dinner will be held on Thursday, May 21 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Community House.

There will be a short "meeting" and presentation of some brief annual reports - but don't let the meeting part keep you away. Dinner will follow promptly, catered by Shoreline Foods who have a well justified reputation. It will be a buffet including chicken piccata, stuffed shells, roast beef, vegetables, rolls, salad, coffee and dessert.

Our entertainment program may even top last year's delightful one-

woman show on The Victorian Lady... We will be entertained by four performers, headed by Will and Katie Tressler, and their group The Jackson Pike Skifflers. We are stretching the budget to invite this rollicking and professional group who play and sing music from 1800 on, so bring your friends, and let's have a great crowd! Everyone is welcome.

Please note the tear off-form on page 3, and get your reservation in by Saturday, May 16. The cost is \$15.00. *(You may notice that the price is a little more than last year, due to an increase in food cost, but, including the program, it is the best bargain around.)*

## Spring & Summer Program

### May 21 \_\_\_\_\_

#### ANNUAL MEETING

Join us for our annual meeting on Thursday, May 21 at the Community House. Dinner will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m., with entertainment following. Note the tear off- form at the end of this letter, and get your reservation in by Saturday, the 16th of May.

### June 1 \_\_\_\_\_

#### GUIDED TOURS OF HARRISON HOUSE

Again this year, the Harrison House, our restored 1724 museum, will be open for guided tours on Fridays and Saturdays from 2-5 p.m. School groups come by appointment in May, often visiting Town Hall and the Center Cemetery first. We furnish a museum room on the second floor

with some changing exhibits, and if you haven't yet explored this lovely house with garden and barn, then do plan to stop by.

### June 20 \_\_\_\_\_

#### STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE AT THE BRANFORD FESTIVAL

And, now, the BIG one! Our annual fund-raising event—Strawberry Shortcake at the Annual Branford Festival on the Green. Be sure to join us for what has become a very popular tradition!

### This Fall \_\_\_\_\_

Looking ahead to October and the annual tag sale...we will accept items for the sale and store them any time, and George Goeben, 481-9200 is the person to call.



# Join Us For Strawberry Shortcake At The Branford Festival!

We look forward to seeing all of you at our big annual fund-raising event—Strawberry Shortcake at the Branford Festival!

While we have no over-all chairman this year, we are so well organized that we are confident everything will miraculously fall into place—that is, with the help of our five committee chairs: Jane Bouley, paper supplies; Winnifred Judge for the hulling; Harriet White for the servers; Elinor King for the kitchen; and George Goeben on tickets. Plus, President Bob Bescher is keeping tabs and patting backs!

As always, there is a long list of man-power needed, and chairmen will be calling their lists some week soon. If you are not called, and

would like to be part of this really exciting day, then don't hesitate to call any of the above chairmen and offer your time.

We expect that anyone who has an "in" with the weatherman, will work a spell for sunshine, or at least no rain!

In the tradition of this wonderful event, Bishop's strawberries and real whipped cream will be the fare, but we will all miss Castellon's good biscuits, an important part of the shortcake for as long as we've been serving. We will welcome, instead, biscuits from Thimble Islands Foods, The Bakery, the new bake shop on Meadow Street.

A separate mailing will go out shortly with the four tickets which we

send to all members. It is appreciated when members are able to buy those tickets, and very careful records are kept to show what is pre-paid when you or your guests come to claim the shortcakes.

Greeting friends and enjoying the truly delicious shortcake under the trees is one of the pleasures of the Branford Festival—we hope you will join us!



## 1997 Accessions Donors

Thanks to the 1997 Donors to the Accessions Committee: Helen and Bob Bescher, Miriam Bigelow, The Blackstone Library, Jane Bouley, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Brewer, Carmen Carbone, George Goeben, Nancy Hendricks, Alice Howell, Bill Jackson, Mabel Kerrigan, Mary Leversky, Eunice Medlyn, Arnold Peterson, Thomas and Elizabeth Pugh, Lester Smith, Robert and Phoebe Smith, and Beth Scherer Vanerstar.

"These donations and loans allow us to maintain our museum and add to the archives." says Alta Powelson, Accessions Chairman. "Please continue to share your bits of Branford history."

### Annual Dinner Reservation Form

Thursday, May 21, 1998, 6:30 p.m. at the Community House

**Reservation Deadline: May 16**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

@ \$15.00 per person

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form by MAY 16 to:**  
Branford Historical Society  
P.O. Box 504, Branford, CT 06405



# Historical Society Review

## Haven't the programs been great this year!

We began with Jane Miller's lively tales of women pilots in World War II, followed by Tom Daly's interesting discussion of the Shakers, both in Massachusetts and elsewhere, and, in April, Dr. Viet's engrossing account of the enigma of Benedict Arnold.

There has been a large and enthusiastic audience each time - we've even run out of coffee! Thank you to program chairman, Judy Myjak!

## And how do you like meeting

## in the Blackstone Library?

The Board thinks that it has been both a comfortable and attractive place to be - an elevator available instead of stairs or ramp. We dare to hope that more members will attend the program meetings there. The only catch is that there is a fee for all organizations using the cultural center, and so we will be asking for a suggested contribution of a \$1 per person attending. Anything over that will go for the coffee and for the program itself. We do pay a lecturer's fee, and it sometimes includes a dinner or overnight. Look for the

miniature Harrison House labeled DONATIONS on the table as you come in, and let us know what you like and don't like about the programs.

## Let's give a warm welcome to...

Our membership now stands at 210, and we welcome our newest members: Lois Obel, Mr. & Mrs. George O'Neill, and Barbara Bailey.



HELEN & BOB BESCHER  
4 PAWSON ROAD  
BRANFORD, CT 06405

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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