



**Avon Historical Society President's Report  
37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, April 13, 2011  
[www.avonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.avonhistoricalsociety.org)**

***AVON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION: to identify, collect, preserve, utilize, publish, display, and promote the history and heritage of Avon. (Approved by the AHS Board, Jan. 10, 2001)***  
The Society was founded in 1974 by some forward thinking individuals who wanted to make sure the history of Avon was not forgotten during the celebration of our nation's Bicentennial in 1976. For that we thank them and today I share with you a report on the past year to show that we have that same spirit with us.

**PROPERTIES: THE LM, PGS AND DH ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ON SUNDAYS FROM 2-5PM, JUNE 5 – SEPT. 25**

Living Museum (LM) – As the Society's "headquarters" it maintains and stores the archival collection of the Society. On display are items representing life in 1830, when the town was named. Also contains history of the Farmington Canal. In late summer 2011 we will place a marker next to the museum on the site of the crossing of the Farmington Canal. Monthly meetings of the Society held at the Museum on the second Wednesday's of every month at 7:00pm. Everyone is welcome.

Pine Grove Schoolhouse (PGS) – Our most visited property, it is interpreted as a schoolhouse at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2010 we had a grounds cleaning, open house on Avon Day and are working on restoring the outhouse. An update on various projects that need volunteer help will be in the Summer newsletter.

Derrin House (DH) – This will be the first summer the DH will be open to the public for the whole season! Continued restoration is on-going and Len Tolisano has many projects for volunteers. Thanks to donations and assistance from a local Girl Scout troop, two raised gardens will be planted. A brick walkway will be laid that leads from the parking lot, through the gardens and to the entrance of the building.

Horse Guard Barn (HGB) – New this year is the lease of the HGB by the Society. This new project will be overseen by Len Tolisano and Krystyn Silver. A work project report is attached.

Marion Hunter History Room – As many of you may know, the Hunter History Room at the Avon Free Public Library is staffed by volunteers and provides a well-needed and well-used service for those interested in genealogy, historic house hunting, old map viewing, old newspaper reading, etc. It's a plethora of wonderful local history and it is being overseen by the Library and, thanks to their planning, will be moved into much more visible space when the new library is built. The room will be on the first floor with glass walls allowing for display space and visibility of items kept there. We are excited by the possibility it will offer and very grateful for the vision and foresight the Library Board has to promote our mission of keeping local history alive and available to future generations.

**MEMBERSHIP/MARKETING:**

This year we enhanced our membership numbers by giving a one-year free membership to owners of homes in town built prior to 1890. We also hosted them at an event in the History Room of the library where over 20 homeowners accepted our invitation to attend and view or start a file on their property. We plan to do

another event like this later in 2012 after the new library is open for owners of homes built between 1890 and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Our website is in its 2<sup>nd</sup> full year of operation and, thanks to Peter Wright, it is a well used and much more accessible marketing vehicle for us. Our new brochures are in their second printing and will be expanded upon next year as we continue to grow.

#### **AVON HIGH SCHOOL CLUB:**

Thanks to Board member Rachel Neuhoff, a junior at Avon High School, there is a club for the historical society at the school. Rachel and her friend, Beca Lichtler, and their advisor Mr. Lou Pellegrino, are working on finding members and identifying what projects to work on that will benefit the students involved. We pleased Rachel and Beca have joined us and will form this club for young adults.

#### **FUNDRAISING:**

Last fall our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Cow Chip Raffle took place on Saturday, October 16 at 2pm at the Simmons Family Farm on Tillotson Road. About 50 people, including kids, came out and had fun waiting to see who would be first! It took just 90 minutes. We raised \$2,500. Prior to that was the AVON DAY and selling of Cow Raffle Tickets at Walmart. **This year's event, our 4<sup>th</sup> annual, will be on Saturday, October 1 at 2pm.** We hope you will all buy tickets and attend to join in the festivities.

An "Antiques Appraisal Clinic," our own version of Antiques Road Show, will be held on Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30pm at the Carmon Family Center. For \$5 per item, antique specialists will provide verbal appraisals. Start cleaning your attics now!

Profits from both the Cow Chip Raffle and the Antiques Appraisal Clinic will be used to jump start the initial work to be done on the Horse Guard Barn. A much larger fundraising campaign will be announced later this year.

#### **UPDATE SINCE LAST ANNUAL MEETING:**

1. The Society held three events for the public – "New England's Participation in the French & Indian War," "Civil War Medicine," and "Shady Art of the Silhouette."
2. Thanks to several new volunteers, the Society's booth at AVON DAY was a huge success! Simultaneous to Avon Day we held an open house at Pine Grove School House. We had about 35 visitors during the day.
3. The Society accepted from the Avon VFW Post 3272, for placement in the History Room, written histories of over 20 local veterans. This is the second set given to the library by the VFW and they expect to do this kind of presentation annually.
4. Peter Wright, Board member, published his photograph book, AVON THEN & NOW, which is available through the Society. This is a collection of photos from 100 years ago contrasted with the same scene now. It is widely popular and we welcome this addition to our collection.
5. The Society, in partnership with the Avon Library, is part of the town's Sesquicentennial Committee to commemorate the Civil War. The war started on April 16, 1861 (just days from now) and many towns, through their libraries and historical societies, are planning series of events to last anywhere from 3-5 years marking the many CT citizens who fought. Avon's committee is very busy and attached are just some of the events coming. We encourage you to participate in all of these events as they focus a lot on local Avon history and the resident's participation in the war.

**SAMPLE OF PROJECTS/GOALS FOR 2011-2012:**

1. Strong focus on marketing the Society in order to: (1) grow membership and more volunteers for our projects, (2) sell our merchandise, (3) encourage more attendance at our fundraisers, (4) have more families participate in our school events & (5) partner with other clubs/organizations on appropriate programming.
2. Continue to provide the public with educational programs that impart something about local Avon history or that of the region. To date most are associated with the Civil War commemoration, but we will try to have one or two this coming year with a more local focus.
3. Launch the HGB project with fundraising, events, and work projects.
4. Participation in the Farmington Valley Visitor Association's Historic Sites Committee's "Historic Barn and Working Farm Bus Tour" on April 30<sup>th</sup>.
5. Hold an OPEN HOUSE at the Living Museum June 5<sup>th</sup> with book signing by Peter Wright.
6. Strong participation in the Avon Day on September 24<sup>th</sup>
7. **SUCCESSFUL ANTIQUES APPRAISAL CLINIC on April 26<sup>th</sup>.**
8. **SUCCESSFUL COW CHIP RAFFLE on October 1st.**

If you have any questions, please call Terri Wilson at 860-674-9769 or e-mail at: [terri@computersbylee.com](mailto:terri@computersbylee.com)

Thank you for attending the Annual Meeting.