



Fall 2011 Newsletter

HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING IDEAS!

AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE OR BY PHONE:
860-678-7621
(FREE DELIVERY TO AVON ADDRESSES)

- **BOOKS:**

Avon, Connecticut by Mary-Frances Mackie, 1988, \$22.00

Images of America—Avon by Nora Howard, 2000, \$20.00

A is for Avon by Jan Brennan & her students, 2009, \$10.00

Avon (Acadia Press Then and Now series) by Peter Wright, 2010, \$22.00

Catch'd on Fire, Journals of Rev. Rufus Hawley (see page 2) by Nora Howard, 2011, \$24.00

- **NOTECARDS—5 per package \$3.00:**

Pen & ink images of Pine Grove Schoolhouse, Living Museum, & Derrin House

- **PRINTS suitable for framing:**

1869 map of Avon, \$5.00

Farmington Canal (pen & ink), \$3.00

School House No. 3 (Living Museum), \$3.00

Various Avon sites, \$5.00

- **CAT's MEOW wooden bookshelf blocks \$12.00 each:**

Farmington Canal

Pine Grove Schoolhouse

Charles Miller House (Italianate style house) located on Waterville Road

- **Oval AVON car decals, \$3.00 each**

President's Message

This has certainly been a year to remember! It's hard to believe that we are close to the end of 2011! It was another banner year for the Avon Historical Society. We signed the lease on the Horse Guard Barn in January, helped to kick off a multi-year commemoration of the American Civil War (including a loud report from an authentic Civil War-era rifle,) restored the Pine Grove Schoolhouse outhouse, and assisted the Avon Free Public Library with the fundraising needed for a new building which is going to house a much larger, grander Marion Hunter History Room! What more can we be doing? Behind the scenes we have been actively fundraising for the stabilization of the south side of the Horse Guard Barn. We thank you all for buying Cow Chip Raffle tickets and attend-

ing some of our events. While we have a long way to go to our goal, we are getting there step-by-step, which is how we restored the Derrin House. It's all lessons learned and a good helping of patience.

Additionally we are pleased that our Town Historian, Nora Howard, has published a new book on the 48-year journals of Rev. Rufus Hawley who was the minister of our town from the colonial era to the early industrial age. This book reveals quite a lot about our town's history and is worth a read. (see Page 2) Please visit our website often and see our gift buying guide on this page. We wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

Terri Wilson, President

AVON DAY thank you



Thanks to everyone for helping make **AVON DAY** a great success again this year. Many of you stopped by to say hello and get your Cow Chip Raffle tickets. We sold a significant number. Thank you to all our volunteers who took the time to staff the booth and sell the raffle tickets: Moira Chubb,

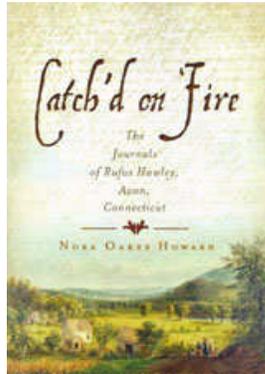
Dennis Dix, Glenn Lawrence, Lesley Mancini, Liz Neff, Jim Putnam, Terri Wilson, Peter Wright and Wendy Zacchera. Thanks also to Jim Putnam for the **rain barrel** project which debuted at AVON DAY. The latest addition to our gift shop, are reclaimed plastic barrels fitted with a spigot and are available for your garden watering needs. At \$40 they are a great buy! Call or go to the website to order. They will be delivered by Jim himself!

Pam Fahey, Vice President

Catch'd on Fire just published

A new book, by Avon Town Historian Nora Howard, brings to life her 10+ year research on the 48-year journals of Rev. Rufus Hawley who served as minister of Farmington's Parish of Northington, later Avon, from the colonial era through to the early industrial age. Born in Farmington, educated at Yale and appointed to this parish, Rev. Hawley was the main figure in all that happened in Northington and Avon. He baptized most all children, married most all couples, attended to the needs of the community as much as he

possibly and physically could all the while keeping a journal of his day's



events. Those journals were handed down through the family and eventually by the last owners to Nora for her research. This is a rich account of not only local history but also national as Rufus mentions the movements of Washington and Hessian soldiers in Farmington during the American Revolution; the Great Awakening movement; elections of state officials, etc. It also reflects the personal and emotional life of a small town minister.

To order this book, please visit: www.avonhistoricalsociety.org today!

From Avon to Appomattox: Lives and Legacy of the Civil War **Join a book series about the Civil War with leading expert**

Our own Avon Free Public Library is the proud recipient of an American Library Association and National Endowment for the Humanities grant to host a book discussion this winter entitled *Let's Talk About It: Making Sense of the American Civil War*. The series, scheduled to run from January through May 2012, will be lead by Dr. Matthew Warshauer, Professor of History at Central Connecticut State University and the state director of the Civil War Commemoration events. The library has the books available for reading in advance and is hoping for a large participation. Due to the Library's construction, the first few sessions will be held at the Avon Congregational Church on West Main Street. The Avon Historical Society continues to participate with the town's sesquicentennial committee on planning future exhibits on the Civil War with various themes and topics that will focus on Avon soldiers and local stories of interest. These exhibits will start up again in the summer of 2012 in the new li-

brary and newly created Marion Hunter History Room. Stay tuned for more details!

In the Great Rebellion, as it is often known, some 620,000 Americans both Union and Confederate lost their lives. When the war began, Connecticut regiments were called to arms by decrees by both President Abraham Lincoln and Governor William Buckingham, who served as the state's chief executive throughout the war. Connecticut offered 55,000 men, some 10% of the state's population. (A total of 94 from Avon joined in 1864. The 1860 census showed 1,059 residents in Avon.) These troops served in every engagement of the war, and the state's industrial capacity, especially the arms industry, was essential to the North's success.

Many towns in CT are hosting talks, encampments and exhibits. For more information on the state's events, please visit: <http://finalsite.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=4633>

Cow Chip Raffle **2011**



The Society held it's 4th annual Cow Chip Raffle on October 1st under a chilly, but dry Fall sky. The Simmons Family once again brought out three of their best cows—Tullulah, Clementine and Edna Lou—to participate in this event. This year we are proud to announce that we sold a record number of tickets netting us the highest profit to date! Proceeds this year will go the Horse Guard

Barn stabilization effort. Special thanks go to Sharon Genovese and Mary Harrop who co-chaired the event. Also thanks to everyone who assisted selling tickets at Walmart and Cosi—Dennis Dix, Wendy Zacchera, Jeannie Parker, Jim Putnam, Liz Neff, Glenn Lawrence, Pam Fahey, Peter Wright and Lesley Mancini and Ruth Woodford.

Plans are underway for a 5th annual event next year—watch this newsletter or our website for more details.

Gardens now and in the future

As was reported in the Summer Newsletter, Avon Girl Scout Troop 66869, led by Sharon Lopreiato, planted herb, medicinal and cut flower gardens at the Derrin House. Plants were donated by Sunnybrook Farm Garden Center in Avon. The girls researched the appropriate plants for each garden based on historical data. The following were planted: Bee Balm, Black-eyed Susan, Bleeding Heart, Calamintha, Chives, Comfrey, Daylily, Dill, Foxglove, Iris, Lady's Bedstraw, Lamb's Ear, Lavendar, Oregon, Curley Parsley, Parsley Italian,

Peppermint, Rosemary, Salvia, Tanay, Thyme, and Violet.



Society volunteer and gardener, Lesley Mancini, is back from a year-long job assignment on the west coast and

has offered to help with the pocket garden next to the Living Museum. She is seeking donations of perennials for planting before the first snow fall. Examples would be hostas, bleeding hearts and sword ferns. She is also looking for volunteers to serve on the ad hoc Gardens and Grounds Group (GGG) to keep track of the gardens and plantings around all our buildings. If anyone is interested in donating plants this fall or next spring, or can volunteer to help, please contact Lesley at: 860-655-8011 or e-mail her at: lesley.mancini@gmail.com

Update on the Horse Guard Barn

Thanks to many of you and various community organizations the Society has been successful in raising money needed to stabilize the south side of the barn, particularly the roof, which sustained damage during the hurricane in August and subsequent tropical storm rains the following month. As of this writing it is anticipated that you will very soon see a tarp on the roof while inside the weight load of the roof will be shifted to a temporary wall. This is being done to keep the roof from further damage during the winter months. During that time the Society will begin

an aggressive fundraising campaign to find the funds necessary to replace the south wall and whole roof. It is not small task, but we are up to the challenge!

The Society would like to thank the following local organizations for donations to the Barn to date: Prince Thomas of Savoy Society; Avon VFW Post 3272; Ladies Auxiliary of the Prince Thomas of Savoy Society among other private donations.

If you would like to make a secure online donation, please visit our website at: <http://>



Little House on the Prairie at PGS



This summer the Pine Grove School House was treated to a blast from the past. A local family rented the site for a Little House on the Prairie party for a group of 5-year old girls. The mother of the birthday girl provided hats, slates and lunch pails and our own Jeannie Parker met them, in costume, for a lesson inside the school house then took them outside for lunch under the big maple tree. The girls loved being able to step back and re-create a much less complicated time in life.

There seems to be a resurgence in the interest by this young generation in the show and the Ingalls family. Perhaps others will do that same and we would welcome their visiting our Pine Grove School House as it is very similar to many of the one-room school in the TV show. Contact us if you know of someone who might be interested in doing something similar next summer! We would welcome any and all children visiting our wonderful little school house on "Avon's prairie."



Avon Historical Society
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The Mission of the Avon Historical Society, founded in 1974, is to identify, collect, preserve, utilize, publish, display and promote the history and heritage of Avon.

Officers: Terri Wilson, President
 Pam Fahey, Vice President
 Wendy Zacchera, Secretary
 Monte Hopper, Treasurer

Directors: Ben Isaacson
 Glenn Lawrence
 Liz Neff
 Rachel Neuhoff
 Jim Putnam
 Krystyn Silver
 Len Tolisano
 Peter Wright

**NOTE: Holiday gift ideas on our website!
 Check it out today!**

Special Thank You's and Other News

Thanks to **Northwest Community Bank** for a grant this summer to re-print our AVON tri-fold brochure. This document is given to all visitors, distributed as requested through various venues in the area and provides a brief overview of Avon's history and sites to visit.

Thanks to **Jeannie Parker** who represented the Society at Avon's Annual Newcomer's event in September. After welcoming new residents to town she spoke with many about joining the Society, what programs we have and how they can be part of it all.

We thank the **Avon Land Trust** for participating with the Society in what we hope will be the first of many geocaching events in town. On our Opening Day in June, over 25 people from many towns in the state participated in this event hiking in our open spaces, finding hidden treasure and ending up visiting the Living Museum for refreshments.

A very special thank you to **Mystic River Foundry** for creating two bronze plaques for placement on stone markers on opposite sides of Route 44 (one at daCapo's Restaurant and one at the Living Museum) to show the crossing of the Farmington Canal from 1828-1849.

Dedication of the markers and plaques will be held on Opening Day, June 3, 2012. Watch for details in the Winter Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER!
We hope that you will remember to send in your annual dues. A letter was sent in the summer with details. Do it today!

HELP WANTED!! The **Marian Hunter History Room** is being enlarged thanks to the expansion of the Avon Free Public Avon Library. It is going to be on the first floor of the library very visible to all who enter. It has been decided that it should be staffed daily from 11am to 3pm and some evening. Therefore we are in need of volunteers to help with this. The existing team of volunteers will help you "learn the ropes" of how to research the files for genealogy, property or document requests that come in daily, how the documents are handled and how to use the computer for research. If you are interested, please contact the Society by mail, phone or e-mail and we will be happy to have you join us!



BAKELESS BAKE SALE!

A bit of news we have today
 A bakeless bake sale is on the way
 In these busy days, who wants to bake
 a pie or cookies or even a cake?

You'd be surprised if you counted the cost
 of ingredients, heat and time you've lost.

Baking for sales is extra work,
 Yet no one really wants to shirk.

So we've thought of a plan that's really grand,
 and feel quite sure you'll understand.
 In an envelope please include the price
 of a pie, a cake or anything nice.

Without fuss or bother, you've done your part
 we hope you'll give with a willing heart.

Wishing success for our BAKELESS BAKE
 SALE

This is the end of our little tale!

You can write a check to us for an amount that
 would equal the cost of your baked good(s) and
 ENJOY DOING SOMETHING NICE FOR
 YOURSELF!

Thank you!