Windham Historical Society uarterlu Review

PRESIDENT'S LETTER Coming Alive in '25

By Susan Simonson

You may think that winter is a quiet time for the Society, but behind the scenes, there has been a flurry of activity that is leading up to an exciting 2025 season.

Our main focus for the year will be on making renovations to the 1833 Town House (main brick museum building). The floor joists on the first floor are failing and so our top priority is replacing them. Dirt

and moisture in the basement have caused significant water damage over the years and it is causing the building to slowly sink.

Of course, the joists are almost 200 years old and they have done their job, but the time

has come for action to be taken. There are several benefits to moving this project forward.





First of all, it will enable us to make changes to the building that would make it more efficient and useful to Society members and the general public.

 ${f T}$ o begin with, the renovations will allow us to have the first floor all on one level. A proper foundation will provide vapor barriers and ventilation that will make

the building healthier and prevent mold and mildew problems in the future. We are considering working with a local contractor to guide us through the process, which frankly, is overwhelming. We believe the use of a professional consultant will be a cost-effective and efficient

expenditure when considering the scope of this project. Our intent is to use reliable local (continued)



Top & Middle: The Old Town House was erected in 1833 and has been part of Windham's history ever since. For years, the building was not only the home to the Windham Town office but also served as a high school and grammar school. Bottom Left: Presently, the structure has two levels. With the foundation replaced, it could be a one-level building with the old carpeting removed, replaced or restored. Bottom Middle: Today, the building has only one entrance. With renovations, a second handicap-accessible entrance could be added making it easier for people with disabilities to visit. Bottom Right: Our current bathroom is small and outdated. Renovations would allow us to have a larger, more accessible facility.

tradespeople to get the work done and bring the project to completion.

The Board has put a lot of thought into improvements that need to be made to the building. We have gathered a list organized by priority and will divide renovations into phases. As time and funds allow, we will focus on making the building weather-tight, we will make exterior updates, including making it more handicap-accessible all while still preserving its original country charm. Interior renovations would include better bathrooms, an easy-to-access research library, and a place for more exhibits and displays that focus on the history of the building and our town.

m We will be launching a full-scale fundraising campaign in 2025. This will include approaching local businesses and financial institutions to see if they would be willing to donate funds. We will also be pursuing grants from both the government and local sources.

f We will need to develop a fundraising packet to present our case to potential donors. This will take using a professional graphic designer to develop a brochure and possibly some other promotional materials to be used along the way.

To help us achieve these rather lofty goals, we need to reach out to our membership to ask for your support as well. You may hear from me sometime in the next few months to see if we could set up a meeting to better acquaint you with the project and our goals. If you feel you have the resources to make a contribution, your help will be greatly appreciated.

f We are in the process of addressing the scope of the project and once we have accessed the costs and we have more details in place, I will provide an update with monetary expectations. The long-term goal for the Society is to make the 1833 Town House Museum a more useful and efficient resource for Society members, visitors, and the greater Windham community for at least another 200 years. With your backing, we can get it done.

Get behind us, do your part, and Come Alive in '25! We're counting on YOU!

WINDHAM **HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION STATEMENT**

The goal of the Windham Historical Society is to foster interest in the history of the town by presenting relevant programs, providing educational opportunities, and maintaining historical facilities where displays of the town's past are available.

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Spring Planning for our Little Sprouts

The Windham Historical Society is now in the planning stages for two exciting and very rewarding projects involving nine teachers and their third grade students from the Windham Primary School.

Over 150 students who have completed studies in Windham history will begin tours of the historic Village Green to see, hear, touch, and even smell much of the times and culture they've been studying.

Stewards of the museum buildings will soon begin uncovering antiquities and putting together programs for the troops of history-minded youngsters who will be paying us a visit. Docents will be wearing smiles and period costumes as the students experience 19th century Windham. In the one-room schoolhouse, they will practice cursive writing,



Visiting scholars always enjoy their class with schoolmarm Paula Sparks

natives. They will be taught about Babb's Bridge,

the historic Parson Smith House, and other places of historic significance in Windham's 288-year history.

ciphering (math), and memorization. They will also stand in the re-creation of the South Windham Railroad Depot and they will browse the aisles of Hawke's Grocery Store

that was relocated to our Village Green.

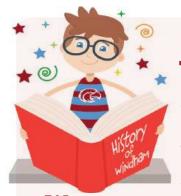
While in their classrooms, the students will have learned about the last battle fought between New Marblehead's founding settlers and the local



The Old Grocery is a wealth of living history for students to explore

Armed with this knowledge, students will board buses with a Historical Society guide and will see and stand in the places that helped shape and define our community. It is our pleasure to plant the seeds of history in the minds of these voung sprouts. Hopefully, it will grow into an appreciation of the past that they will want to share with future generations, keeping Windham's history alive for many years to come.





Junior History Club Happenings By Paula Sparks

he winter isn't slowing down and neither is the Junior History Club!

In November, we elected Club officers when enthusiastic campaign speeches were made and votes were cast. It was a tight race, but we now have a vicepresident, secretary, and treasurer for the club and the officers are doing a great job fulfilling their new positions. With these jobs comes more responsibility such as taking attendance, keeping track of points members have accumulated when playing our games, and keeping general order during the meetings. Our first treasurer's report will be coming soon.

We have been exploring the Boomer Era this year and it's especially fun using today's technology to introduce the club to those times. We were able to see photography, news, television, and movies that provide a wonderful first-hand experience. YouTube videos, clips of Halloween parties, the history of Jello, the creation of Mr. Potato Head, and watching old TV shows like My Three Sons, Leave it to Beaver, and The Partridge Family provided excellent opportunities to see and talk about the values of the time, the clothing people wore, the food, and how things have changed since then. Beaver being able to walk to the store alone, the women and girls wearing dresses, and the dads all dressed up in suits were some of the examples noted by Club members.

Since just about every month has a holiday to celebrate, we've been using those holidays to learn about history. For example, did you know a Butterball Turkey glut caused the invention of the TV dinner? The Club learned this while playing Thanksgiving Trivia. Teams competed to complete their Mr. Potato Heads by answering questions from the Boomer era. To go

along with the trivia, we sampled molded gelatin, spam, and pineapple and cheese hors d'oeurves.

At Christmas, we explored classic toys and played a memory game using mini reproductions of some Baby Boomer favorites like Etch-A-Sketch, Silly Putty, Matchbox Cars, etc. At another meeting we saw some original toys and the kids were surprised by their less-than-safe designs and materials.





Top: The Club enjoying their weekly

Bottom: Making "Pet Rocks" was a hit



Top: Club members used Mr. Potato Heads to keep score in a trivia

Bottom: Campaign speeches were made by candidates during the Člub's first election

f We learned about the "Comic Book Code," which included an indicia that was stamped on comic books to indicate they met proper moral standards. Due to some questionable content, *Mad* became a magazine and lost its comic book status. We went through advertisements for careers, money-earning and higher education opportunities, and we perused catalogs with toys that could be purchased and had fun deciding which ones we would have wanted to get as Christmas gifts. In keeping with the Christmas theme, we created Christmas Globe Ornaments that looked great on our silver aluminum tree until they were taken home to be given as presents.

You actual Baby Boomers may remember the Pet Rocks that were sold for about six months from 1975-76. They made the creator a millionaire! The Club learned this and more about this 70's fad, including learning how to get investors, what intellectual property is, and how to protect your product using trademarks and copyrights. Afterward, we created our own pet rocks, complete with an instruction book and carrying case.

Did you know February 14 is not just Valentine's Day? Both YouTube and the telephone were born on that day as well. The kids learned this and more interesting facts as we played Valentine's Day "SWEET" Bingo.

We are in the planning stages for our Boomer interviews. We are hoping to create a recorded panel interview at one of our Spring meetings. If you would like to participate and share some memories with us, please leave a message at the Society by calling 892-1433. We will be in touch soon with more information.



CONDOLENCES

By Carol Manchester

Windham Historical Society is fortunate to have younger people joining our Society and becoming involved in its management, for this winter we mourn the loss of four of our long-time and treasured members.

The last of Windham's WWII veterans, **Carroll McDonald**, 99, born in Windham and a graduate of the class of 1942, passed away on November 14, 2024. His love for music and airplanes was engendered as a youth. During his high school years, he played trumpet in a local dance band and at one point formed his own group, the Don Carroll Orchestra. After briefly attending a business college, he accepted a commission in the US Army Air Corp at age 18 and graduated from Flying School in December 1944. Becoming a pilot was a dream come true for Carroll.

McDonald's working career spanned 32 years as a rural letter carrier. He held membership in the Masons, Windham Hill Church, Windham Historical Society, and was a past commander of the American Legion Post 148. He was also a volunteer driver for *Meals on Wheels*. In a story that appeared in the *Windham Eagle* on November 22, 2024, Ed Pierce wrote, "Of everything he accomplished during his lifetime, McDonald said he would like to be remembered most as a pilot and for his miliary service in the defense of America." And so we shall. You may wish to read Ed Pierce's November 22nd article for more information.



Carroll McDonald in one of the last photos taken of him Photo courtesy of David Tanguay

Life member **Merrill Kenneth Griffin**, 91, died on December 28, 2024. He was born January 20,1933 and lived in Novato, California. Although he lived across the country, Merrill remained in touch with his Windham family, visiting occasionally, emailing, and sending holiday cards to nephew **Walter Lunt** and family. Merrill graduated from Windham High School in 1951 and made a career in the Air Force, serving during Vietnam and sending Walter "unusual gifts from his trips all over the world," such as whale's teeth and a Japanese mystery box. After retiring from the Air Force, Merrill retired to Novato and became director of utilities at a nearby hospital. He maintained a connection with his home town through Windham Historical Society newsletters and cheered our progress through the years.

Karen Lougee's death on January 8, 2025 was both sudden and unexpected. Secretary for the Historical Society's Board of Directors and Steward of the recently opened Windham Center Library on the Village Green, Karen was 70. Please see the tribute that Haley Pal has written on the next page.

Another person who shared her love and commitment to Windham Historical Society was **Norma Rogers**, 92. Norma died on January 18, 2025.

Our President Susan Simonson wrote the following obituary that details some of Norma's many contributions to our organization:

Windham Historical Society has lost another remarkable member. Norma Rogers, 92, has passed away. Since her husband's passing, she had been living with one of their sons, Dale, and his wife in Sebago.



Norma Rogers being honored for her work with "Windham Neighbors Helping Neighbors". Pictured with her are Gary Plummer, Bill Diamond, and Mark Bryant

She and her husband Don were very active in the Historical Society and in many other community activities. Norma was instrumental in opening up the Old Grocery Museum to the public when it was located at the corner of Windham Center Road and Route 202 – its former location. She and Don would tend to the grounds, flowerboxes and any other maintenance items that were needed. Norma, Izzy Gilman, and other members hosted visitors at the Grocery when it was open. This group spent endless hours working on the displays, keeping the place spotless, as well as sharing many Windham History stories.

Norma grew up in Windham and lived the majority of her life with Don and their two sons in their historic farmhouse next to Corsetti's. Their close proximity to the Historical Society made it a convenient place for the locals to drop off museum items, to donate baked goods, or deliver crafts they had made for the Society's annual holiday fundraiser.

It was Norma and Izzy who were instrumental in starting up the Christmas Fair held annually at the Society. All of the items for sale were handmade; during the year they spent many months crafting their wares along with numerous homemade donations from the Society's members. When the

weather warmed up, many of the crafts were made out in the Rogers' barn, which was a treat! As the fair grew in popularity around the community, it was not uncommon to make over \$5,000!

Norma was a big part of the Election Day bake sale. Her peanut butter pies were well known around town. One particular Windham policeman preordered his pie, ensuring he would not go without!

Norma was a past President of the Society – sharing the responsibility with Linda Griffin and Izzy Gilman. She was also very active in *Windham Neighbors Helping Neighbors* and the Windham Alumni Association.

Windham Historical Society extends its sincere and deepest condolences to the friends and families of Carroll McDonald, Merrill Griffin, Karen Lougee, and Norma Rogers.



The Society Bids a Final Farewell to a Cherished Member

It is with overwhelming sadness that we say a final goodbye to our Secretary Karen Lougee

Karen passed away on January 8 after a brief illness. She was born on October 7, 1954 and spent her childhood in Brewer before her family moved to Portland when she was 10 years old. She graduated from Deering High School and worked at a fabric shop and the Portland Public Library before beginning a thirty-three-year career at UNUM. Karen was originally hired to work in the Corporate Library and while in that capacity, earned an Associate degree from Westbrook College. This led to changing positions in the company including being a litigation paralegal. She also obtained a certificate in Paralegal Studies through USM. Upon her retirement, Karen began a new chapter of her life and joined the Windham Historical Society.

Karen became a member in 2018 and was elected our Secretary in October of that year. From there, she hit the ground running. Karen was an integral part of the Society's Archives Committee and the Program Committee. You would often see her putting out snacks at the programs we presented at the Little Meetinghouse. When scrapbooks needed to be organized with photos and stories provided by a former member, Karen took on the task with gusto. But, her true passion was the latest project that she completed.

She became the dedicated Steward of the Windham Center Library and her efforts have left her a lasting legacy. Karen worked tirelessly over the past few years getting the building renovated. There were structural issues to be addressed, both externally and internally. The building needed a new roof, windows needed glazing, artifacts and books needed to be collected, archived, and displayed. Floors had to be sanded, furniture found and placed, curtains had to be sewn, flowers purchased for the window boxes, and the front door replaced. Karen worked with contractors, electricians, the Town code department, her daughter, and Society members in putting the finishing touches on the treasured old building. At last year's Fall Harvest Festival, the Windham Center Library was opened to the public for the first time in over 50 years.

Karen was also an avid reader and was fascinated by English and Scottish history. She happily told stories of her trips to Scotland and England and visiting the castles there. After finding out she was descended from a noble Elizabethan-era family, she enjoyed donning the name of Lady Karen when looking for her husband to finish some pesky household chore.

But the true love of Karen's life was her family. Her eyes would shine when she talked about them. She and Gerry had three children together, eight grandchildren, and one great grandson. She enjoyed camping trips to Baxter State Park with her husband, evenings around the campfire with her sons, visiting historic places with her daughter, and was happiest when hosting everyone for Christmas morning breakfast. Karen had a true love of life which made it so hard for many of us who knew her to say goodbye. But, I think she is resting in peace now knowing how many lives she touched and how much she was loved.



By Haley Pal

Goodbye, My Friend

Oh, we never know where life will take us I know it's just a ride on the wheel And we never know when death will shake us And we wonder how it will feel So goodbye, my friend. I know I'll never see you again, But the time together through all the years Will take away our tears. It's OK now. Goodbye, my friend.

— Aaron Neville and Linda Ronstadt

High Tea at High Noon A Fundraiser in Memory of Karen Lougee

By Haley Pal

Karen Lougee loved lilacs. In late spring, her home would be decorated with the delicate lavender blooms, their unmistakable scent filling the air. And so, when thinking about hosting a fundraising event in her honor, lilac season seemed to be a fitting time of year in which to do it.

On Saturday, May 31, the Society will present High Tea at High Noon, an elegant tea party to be held at Windham's Little Meetinghouse at 719 Roosevelt Trail in North Windham.

The event will feature an assortment of high tea favorites to be enjoyed as lunchtime fare. Tea sandwiches, quiches, savory hors d'oeurvres, fresh fruit, and muffins will all be on the menu as well as an appealing assortment of delightful desserts. A variety of teas will be offered as well. The cost to attend is \$25 per person. All proceeds

will go towards improvements to the Windham Center Library and other needed repairs on the Village Green. It all begins at high noon. Seating is limited, so get your tickets early. For more information, call the Society at 892-1433 or contact Event Chair Haley Pal at haleypal@aol.com.

Note to members: We will be seeking individuals who would like to contribute food items for the event. You may be receiving a call asking you to participate. It's for a good cause dedicated to the memory of a good friend. Your help will be most appreciated.



Programs

By Carol Manchester

The first program for the 2025 season was **Geology and Geomorphology of Sebago Lake and the Presumpscot River** with Don Wescott and Irwin Novak. It was held at The Little Meetinghouse on March 3 at 7 p.m.

The program explored the geological history of the lake, its tributaries and outlets, with emphasis on the Presumpscot River. Discussion also included a theory reasoning why Sebago Lake is so deep. Don Wescott is a local historian and Society member associated with the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust; Irwin Novak is professor emeritus, teaching oceanography, geomorphology, and glacial geology at USM.

Other programs on the schedule, with dates, place and time soon to be determined are about:

Dundee Pond: In June of 2024, Dundee Pond was drained in order to repair the dam at the lower end. In draining Dundee the original tow path and canal were revealed as well as the farm site of the Shaw family, a roadway, an original river path, and many artifacts. **Al Farris** with **Don Wescott** will show and discuss some of the artifacts Al uncovered in the area. In addition, the pair will share some fabulous photos and aerial shots taken while the pond was drained.

Babb's Bridge: This season seems to be the "year of the water!" **Gary Plummer** will share the story of Babb's Bridge from its rich history, to the recent truck-falling-through-the-flooring-and-into-the-river incident, to current repair, to the planned celebration slated for later this year.

Another program possibility is a discussion by **Libby Bischof of Osher Map Library** who would educate us on the conservation process used in restoring a very early, extremely fragile map of North Windham.

Also, mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 31, 2025**, when a **High Tea at High Noon** fundraiser in memory of Karen Lougee will take place at the Little Meetinghouse in North Windham. The event will honor Karen for her contributions to the Society including her stewardship and work at the Windham Center Library. For more information, see Haley Pal's article about the event on page 5.

The Third Annual Fall Harvest Festival is slated for Saturday, October 4th on the Village Green: This fun-filled family event has been a real crowd-pleaser with lots of food, games, contests, crafts, and plenty of history to enjoy. Put it on your calendar and get ready for an old-fashioned day of having fun with history! More information about this event will appear in the spring edition of the newsletter.

Meantime, look for more information on Facebook, in membership emails, on our website, and in Haley Pal's "Inside Windham" columns in the *Lakes Region Weekly*.

Windham Then & Now

By Haley Pal

The Village of Great Falls

Just off the rotary on River Road as you follow Windham Center Road towards Gorham, you pass through what was once the Village of Great Falls. Today, it is a quiet section of town where three beautiful old homes still grace the edge of the Great Falls. But in times gone by, it was a much more bustling, vibrant community.

In the 1780s, Zebulon Trickey opened a sawmill at this location. He also built the beautiful Federal style house that can still be seen from its perch off Windham Center Road. Within 10 years, the river had been bridged and there were mills on either side of the Presumpscot. Enoch White's large sawmill was one that used the power of the Falls to make him a wealthy man. He built his home next to Mr. Trickey's where he resided until 1847 when he constructed the house at 4 Great Falls Road, known as the Enoch White House, an excellent example of the Greek Revival style.

White was very popular with his workers and well-known for his innovations. One was his forward-thinking use of a "gang of saws" in the production of lumber which allowed for cutting a single log into several boards at one pass. Upon his retirement, his brother John bought the business and water privileges to continue the operation of the mill.

(continued top of next page)





Top: Great Falls in busier times. There was a sawmill, a fiber mill, a chair factory, and tenement buildings in the village long ago. The Trickey house can be seen at top right.

Bottom: The Federal-style Trickey House is one of the few reminders of the former village of Great Falls.



Windham Then & Now (continued)

John was an adept businessman and the mill continued to prosper under his guardianship.

In 1842. Portland furniture maker Walter Corey opened a chair factory in Great Falls, Corey was a prosperous businessman in Portland where he had a warehouse and a showroom on Free Street where he displayed his furniture, in particular, his "country chairs." Also known as the "peoples chairs," they were affordable while still offering fine craftsmanship and style to the average American. They were so popular with the public that in its heyday, the factory was churning out 20,000 chairs per year. To accommodate his many workers, Corey built four tenement buildings in Little Falls.

 $oldsymbol{\mathsf{M}}$ uch of the village's business success was thanks to the Cumberland Oxford Canal that carried manufactured goods down the Presumpscot to Portland. When it closed in 1882, just 10 years after a major fire devastated the village, things began to change. What remains today are three lovely homes and the Great Falls that originally brought the village to life.

)ueries

Bv Penny Loura

- Lee Allen wanted to know if the land he now lives on can be traced back to the earliest Allen ancestor and to ascertain the date his house was built. He was pointed in the direction of The Registry of Deeds.
- **Libby Allen** is search for an old residence of Carl Sporie. I let her know he was married in Windham and assuming he rented as I could find no evidence of home ownership.
- Daniel Noel was interested in the former Chute Summer **Camp** on Highland Shore Road. It was also called Haven Road and Cushing Road. I could not locate the address in our "House" books and so Mr. Noel decided to visit when we open in the spring to do further research. In the meantime, I've sent him some articles we have on the Chutes.
- Daniel Pride has added new information to the Pride family genealogy.
- **Joel Davison**, a former journalist and a published author, is attempting to gather information to write his memoirs about summers on Sebago Lake. He asked if he could gather information about Windham, the lakes, buildings. etc. I wasn't sure how to reply to him and suggested he ask friends his age that may have experienced similar summers of the time.

onations

By Susan Simonson

The following donations were recently given to the Society:

- Bruce and Cindy Elder and Nancy Bowden made general donations
- Walter and Linda Lunt made a donation in memory of Janice Boucher

The following donations were made in memory of Karen Lougee. All contributions made in her memory will go towards making needed improvements to the Windham Center Library. Karen will surely be smiling down on us as she watches us continue to bring her vision to life.

- Ioshua & Allison Atkins
- Bradley Fogg
- Friends from
- Ronald Fluet
- Carol Whitten
- Sally Mulligan
- Andrew & Haley Pal
- April Bushey
- Dentons Sirote PC Dolly & Jennifer
 - Worthley
- Sam & Susan Simonson
- Walter & Linda Lunt
- David& Carol Manchester
- The Campbell/
 - Lorraine Maquire Lougee Families

(urator's (orner

Bv Penny Loura

We had very few accessions this winter, however recently, **Haley Pal** donated two teapots and a toy to be added to the Old Grocery displays. The teapots will also be put to work at High Tea at High Noon on May 31.



Membership (orner

By Carol Manchester

Windham Historical welcomes four new members to its Society. They are Linda and Tim Morrell and the Bradley Fogg family. WHS welcomes each of you and looks forward to seeing you at some of the interesting programs and events we have scheduled for 2025.

Fill out the form below and write a check made payable to the Windham Historical Society. Mail to:
Windham Historical Society, PO Box 1475, Windham, ME 04062
Individual Membership ☐ \$15 Family Membership ☐ \$25 Lifetime Membership ☐ \$100 per person
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