

Historically Speaking



A newsletter for members and friends of the Norwich Historical Society

Spring/Summer 2008



From the

President's Pen

I was somewhat apprehensive about accepting the position of President of the Norwich Historical Society (NHS) last year. Who wouldn't be...I was replacing Bill Stanley! Bill has done an incredible job of taking the fledgling NHS and, in three years, creating an organization that grew to 800 members, restoring Samuel Huntington's tomb, delivering a stone marker for Benedict Arnold's final resting place in England, and establishing a culture of quality in all that the Historical Society does. However, I think, most importantly Bill has made history very interesting and relevant to everyone (not just a few history buffs)! His were big shoes in which to step!

Fortunately, the Board of Directors has been the strong backbone of the Society. Bill Stanley certainly didn't accomplish everything by himself, and as we transition from Bill Stanley to Bill Champagne, the Board continues to play a major role. Many members of the Society participate at the Board level, and also are actively involved with committee work.

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Norwich Semiseptcentennial (350th) Celebration 2009

HISTORY SUBCOMMITTEE!

The year 2009 will mark the 350th anniversary of the signing of the deed of Norwich, Connecticut. In support of the Norwich Semiseptcentennial, a History Subcommittee has been established, chaired by Dale Plummer and coordinated by Dianne Brown and Kathy Barry Shannon.

The subcommittee is planning a multitude of tours and events to represent the history of

Norwich. Some of the tours will include local museums and cemeteries, Norwichtown, the Rose Garden, Mohegan Park and Spaulding Pond, the anticipated Botanical Gardens, residents' Victorian gardens, mills, factories and places of worship. The subcommittee hopes to reenact the 1959 "Streets of Gold" presentation on the little road of Chelsea Parade North, and there will be soldier reenactment from several past wars. An event in the plan-

ning stage will transport participants into the past to witness several Norwich related vignettes.

The subcommittee is actively seeking volunteers! Do you have a gorgeous flower garden that should be on tour? Would you like to volunteer as a tour guide or participate behind-the-scenes to help plan these important events? Please contact Dianne Brown at diannebrown@diannebrown.com or 860-892-4557.



MEMORABILIA DAY

In conjunction with the Slater Museum, the Norwich Historical Society coordinated a Norwich Anniversary Memorabilia Day which was held on March 1st. The purpose of this event was to digitally photograph and videotape the history and flavor of previous celebrations to be used to complement events leading up to the

Semiseptcentennial as well as Norwich celebrations of the future. Thank you to all who took the time to share their stories and memorabilia.

If you were unable to attend but have an object, photo, drawing or story you would like to share, please contact Ann Shapiro at ann.s@crackerbarrel-ents.com or 889-6581.

Norwich 250th Anniversary
Celebration Ribbon

Special thanks to The Mohegan Tribe for sponsorship of this newsletter.



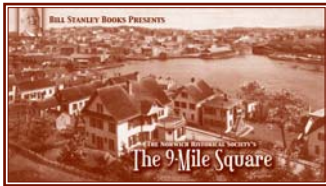
GET THEM WHILE THEY LAST!

**A Great Mother's & Father's Day Gift!
THE 9-MILE SQUARE**

*Bill Stanley's / NHS Award Winning
Norwich History Book!*



The 9-Mile Square book is more than history. There are 408 pages containing 195 stories of the history of Norwich, Bozrah, Franklin, Sprague, Lisbon, Preston and Jewett City / Griswold; many of Bill Stanley's columns and best of all, we will ship it anywhere in the USA "free of charge!"



**Order Your Copy Today.
Free Shipping!**
All proceeds go to the
Norwich Historical Society

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Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
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Please send me information on joining the NHS:

Mail form to: Norwich Historical Society • 236 Harland Rd • Norwich, CT 06360
or pick up your copy at The William W. Backus Hospital Auxiliary Gift Shop
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pick up or order by phone: Johnson's Flowers and Gifts - 1-800-950-0331

Samuel Huntington
wreath laying

July 13th will be a day of concert and recognition of Norwich's Samuel Huntington. While the symbolic ceremony is usually held on July 16th, the new Sunday date will accommodate those who might otherwise miss the ceremony due to work.



Attorney General Blumenthal and Second Company Governor's Foot Guard presenting symbolic presidential wreath to the tomb of Samuel Huntington.

Each year, a symbolic presidential wreath is delivered to Huntington's tomb. The wreath is in recognition of Huntington's honor as first President of the United States under the Articles of Confederation in Congress Assembled.

The symbolic ceremony replicates the honor bestowed upon past U.S. presidents when they received a wreath from the President in power (the wreath was delivered by the U.S. Marine Corps on their respective birthdays). While the Forgotten Founders, an off-spring of the Norwich Historical Society, try to win presidential recognition for Huntington, the Second Company Governor's Foot Guard has, on past occasions, presented the wreath sponsored by the NHS.

The July ceremony will include a band concert presented by the Foot Guard on the Norwichtown Green. The concert will be attended by members of both the First and Second Company Governor's Foot Guard. The Second Company Governor's Foot Guard is an organization coordinated by Benedict Arnold, their first commandant. The Foot Guard has always responded to the requests because Arnold's birthplace was Norwich.



**RICHARD CURLAND
SUCCESS**

The Norwich Historical Society is pleased that the *Norwich Bulletin* allows us to write an article every Wednesday, entitled "Historically Speaking." Bill Stanley started this column many years ago but wanted to concentrate his efforts on the Forgotten Founders project and therefore needed to find a replacement writer for the column. Fortunately for the NHS, Richard Curland offered his services.

Richard is a retired educator and author who loves history of all sorts. He has been writing the column for a year now; his topics range from details about Norwich residents to wide ranging, important or curious events in our nation's history.

We are immensely grateful for Richard's work. We look forward to a collaboration between him and the *Norwich Bulletin* for many years to come.

**Website
Virtual Tours**

A recent addition to the Norwich Historical Society website is a virtual tour of Samuel Huntington's Tomb. The tour consists of a series of snapshots taken as one approaches the burial plot of the United States' first President.

Although simple in nature, this series of photographs has received an astonishing number of hits. For those who are not familiar with a "hit," it is a recorded viewing by a visitor to the website. The tour has generated approximately 200 visitors per month — more than 2,400 hits for the year. The Samuel Huntington tour is our most visited page after the main page!

If you have a virtual tour you'd like to submit or just an idea, please contact Geoff McLean at: geoff@mcleanresearch.com or 886-8599.





BE A PART OF NORWICH'S SEMISEPTCENTENNIAL!

The Norwich Semiseptcentennial History Subcommittee is seeking volunteers! Volunteers are asked to attend monthly meetings and offer time and expertise where needed. Help build a time capsule or take part in creating a

Millennium Quilt. For more information on proposed events, click on the History tab on the website, www.Norwichct350.com, or contact Dianne Brown at diannebrown@diannebrown.com or 860-892-4557.

President's Pen

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"Retreat"

The major highlight of the past year was a planning retreat held by the Board on October 6. The Board agreed that with the Bill S. to Bill C. transition (and the fact that strategic planning had not been done for a while), a Board retreat would be prudent. It turned out to be extremely valuable. We were fortunate to hold the retreat on the Norwich Free Academy campus. Board member Vivian Zoë generously facilitated the proceedings. Vivian is the Director of the Slater Memorial Museum and has been involved with a number of boards, particularly those concerned with historical organizations.

Highlights of the day were the drafting of a new and shorter Mission Statement; establishing six committees; analyzing the society's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats;

and the drafting of short- and long-term goals.

Subsequently, the Board adopted everything proposed at the retreat!

"Onward"

The short-term goals adopted include: developing an ongoing series of public programs, recruiting committee members, publishing four newsletters annually (this one is our first in quite a while), and working with others to make Norwich's 350th Anniversary Celebration as meaningful as possible. The Board is conscientiously working on all of the above initiatives.

It's been a very busy, productive year. We greatly appreciate your membership and hope you'll volunteer your time to work with a committee or on a specific project. Thanks for being a part of Norwich's history!

William Champagne, President
Norwich Historical Society

Membership Drive

If you think the words "history" and "dull" are synonymous, give us a chance to prove you wrong! The Norwich Historical Society plans interesting and exciting events each year that bring Norwich's colorful history to life.

Word of NHS' unique programs, trips, and speeches are spreading - membership enrollment has grown from 40 members to more than 800 since its inception.

With the 350 year anniversary of the Rose City fast approaching, there's never been a better time to get involved. Several commemorative events are already in the planning stages. Don't miss out on the action.

Help us preserve, protect and promote Norwich's rich history while celebrating our promising future.

Join the NHS today. Encourage friends, family and co-workers to join. Help us preserve, protect and promote Norwich's rich history while celebrating our promising future.

Norwich Historical Society Membership Application

- Individual \$25 Family \$50 Student \$5
- Senior \$10 Lifetime \$100
- Associate [Business & Corporations] \$500
- Yes, I am interested in becoming a volunteer. Please contact me.
- Yes, I am interested in joining a committee. Please contact me.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

**Please mail this application with your check to:
Norwich Historical Society • Margot Gibbs, Membership Chairman
236 Harland Road • Norwich, CT 06360**

Memorabilia
presented by
Vivian Zoë
during Norwich
Historical
Society annual
meeting on
March 24, 2008.



Norwich Savings Society - Historic Photo



1859 Amusement
Committee Chairman Badge



Image of the tent for the ball drawn by
Henry V. Edmond in 1859.

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Volunteer – Be a part of the Past, Present and Future.

The Norwich Historical Society welcomes those who would like to add their talents to the Society. Volunteers are greatly needed. There are many opportunities to participate and give of your time, if only for a couple hours a month.

- Special Skills

Do you have an unusual, specialized or history-related skill to share? Please let us know. We're looking for grant writers, newsletter writers, public relations and more.

- Join a Committee

Governance
Programs
Public Relations
Merchandise
350th Anniversary

Programs past and upcoming

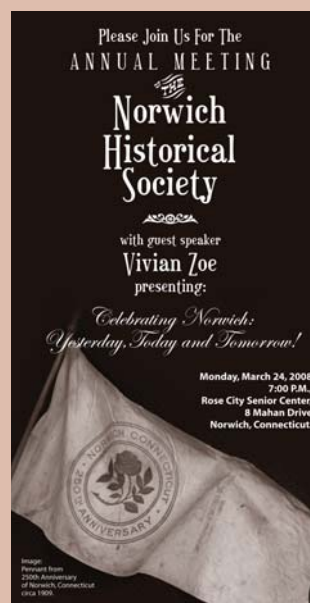
The Program Committee, chaired by Olive Buddington, has the goal of offering four to six quality programs per year. The problem for the committee is not finding subject matter to cover—Norwich has such a rich history—but rather winnowing down the number of ideas.

Bill Stanley's elegant celebration of the wreath laying for Samuel Huntington is a fixture every July on Huntington's birthday. Our annual meeting is also a fixture. State Historian Walter Woodward gave the 2007 annual meeting

address, and this year we were fortunate to have our own Board member, Vivian Zoë, Director of Slater Memorial Museum, give an engaging, well-researched Powerpoint presentation on past Norwich anniversary celebrations. Last November, Tom Callinan and Ann Shapiro performed historical stories and songs before an enthusiastic audience.

Programs in the pipeline for the upcoming year include:

- author and former Norwich Mayor Arthur Lathrop speaking in the recently restored Wauregan ballroom about 19th and 20th century Norwich (particularly interesting events that occurred in the Wauregan)
- a program about the first Republican presidential candidate in 1856, how the campaign was conducted (and curious songs sung at rallies)
- the history of Norwich Free Academy, Slater and Converse, and many more.



Norwich History Society Annual Meeting Invitation featuring a pennant from 250th anniversary of Norwich, Connecticut.

THE
Norwich
Historical
Society

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860-886-1776 • www.norwichhistoricalsociety.org



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