

# SPECIAL EDITION

# Putney Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Fall 2003

## Annual Meeting: Sunday, October 5, 2003

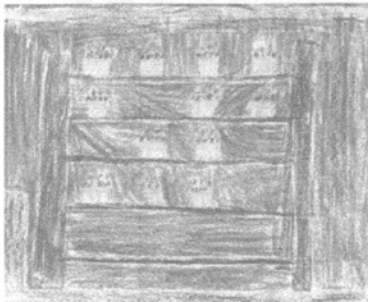
Our annual meeting date is fast approaching. This year we will meet at the Putney Cares Barn from 3-5 pm for coffee, tea, and desserts. Following the business portion of the meeting, the annual program will highlight *Stories from the Farm* as told through a museum exhibit, short story readings, and community memories.

The Putney Historical Society received a grant from the Strolling of the Heifers Foundation in the winter of 2003. The grant provided funds to prepare museum panels about the history of agriculture in Putney and to make accompanying materials for school children and the general public. Lyssa Papazian assembled the necessary content information and built a time line that shows the development of agriculture across three centuries. Deborah Lazar translated this information into four museum panels and a time line while Fern Tavalin worked with Dorothy Grout's third graders at Putney Central to learn about local farms. Volunteers Stuart Strothman, Laurel Ellis, and Elaine Dixon then took the students on trips to visit area farmers. To prepare, the third graders read draft copies of booklets that told stories about each of the farms to be visited: Dellside, Harlow's, Green Mountain Orchards, and River View. They made suggestions for how to improve the stories. Students will be on hand at the annual meeting to read the final versions of some of these booklets. Of special note is the artistry of young Sarah Harlow. Sarah spent many weeks illustrating the story of her grandfather Don Harlow's farm in East Putney.



### Artist's Statement by Sarah Harlow

*I read the story a couple of times so that I could get a good picture in my head of what to do -- things that would go with the story and would match it. Then, I'd try to draw it. I scribble and if the picture is small, I outline it and then color it in. I really like the colors I get from colored pencil. Crayon doesn't let me get details. Markers, I just don't like to use..*



*I have a lot of stuff going on in my life, so I had to plan. I used any free time I had, even if it was just 5 minutes, so I could finish on time. I thought scanning my pictures for the book was great. Some of the people in the drawings got moved around a little to show them better. That was fun to see.*

*Even though the book is about my family, I learned some new things. I learned what Uncle Frank studied and when he bought the farm. I also learned that my grandparents had picnic parties at the end of berry season. I found out that the girl who picked four-leaf clover is the aunt of one of my classmates.*

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# Putney Historical Society Updates

## NEW BOOK

This past year has been extraordinarily busy as the Board finalized the history of Putney, part two. The name of the new book is *Putney: World's Best Known Small Town*. Although events cover several centuries, the major focus of the book is from 1940 to the present. The history book may be ordered from the Historical Society or purchased from Heartstone Books and other local vendors. Profits from books purchased from PHS go directly to the Historical Society. Local merchants are participating in a cost-share program where the PHS receives a portion of the sale of the book. To buy from the Historical Society, go to the Town Hall during museum hours on Wednesdays 2-4 pm or send a check for \$25 plus \$5 shipping and handling to: Putney Historical Society, P.O. Box 233, Putney, VT 05346.

## VETERANS MEMORIAL

On Sunday, October 12 beginning at 11:30 a.m. there will be an old-fashioned Chicken Barbecue held on the common to benefit the Veterans' Memorial fund. Doug Waterman, Henry Roberts and some of the former Lions Club members, who really miss the camaraderie of cooking massive amounts of chicken together, have volunteered to turn those large racks one more time! Dave Hannum has agreed to make the sauce. A variety of homemade salads will complete the meal on a crisp fall day.

## BOARD MEMBERS WANTED

The Historical Society is looking for a few new members to add to our Board. If you don't think you have time to serve on the Board, but would like to volunteer for special projects, that's okay too! If working on the Board or on special projects sounds interesting, contact Laurel Ellis at 387-4489.

## HISTORY EXPO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

PHS has participated in Vermont History Expo for the last three years thanks to the valiant organizing efforts of Barbara Taylor and Ruth Barton. In three short years, the Vermont Historical Society has built the Expo into one of national recognition. If anyone is interested in helping to keep a prominent place for Putney, please contact the Historical Society.



Visitors enjoy the agriculture exhibit at the Celebration 2003 Street Fair



Ruth Barton (left) and Lyssa Papazian (right) tend the Putney Historical Society booth while waiting to lead cemetery and mill tours.



Lisa Delmar (left) helps Beth Hughes (right) hang a sign advertising *Putney: World's Best Known Small Town*

## A Review of the 250th

by Laurel Ellis and Fern Tavalin

All we can say about the success of Celebration 2003 is "Wow!" It was far better than our greatest expectations – not for the dazzle of superficial props or dignitaries but for the way everyone who participated became caught up in an indescribable sense of privilege to be a part of this amazing town's history.

Planning began three years before the event itself when the Historical Society Board created a vision for hosting a community celebration. Ideas like a clay mural, a parade, exhibits, a new history book, singing and dancing saw their first glimpse of reality when the Vermont Humanities Council funded the book project with additional support from the Paul Foundation. Under the coordination of Fern Tavalin, the interviewing, researching, and writing began. Putting the book together provided a natural base for knowing what would engage the entire town in a celebration; so Fern volunteered to coordinate the summer 2003 events, too.

Our extensive pre-planning and the Town of Putney's sponsorship convinced the Vermont Community Foundation to put some of their dollars into our celebration. The VCF does not usually fund single events. But in this case, they thought that the collaboration we proposed would lead to an increased sense of a unified community for the people in Putney. From there, the foundation believed that more great things would follow in the years to come. And we know they will!

At the town picnic in September 2002, people added to the list of ideas generated by the PHS Board the spring before. In October 2002, the Historical Society used its annual meeting to firm up some preliminary details and to generate a list of activities. By March 2003, the whole town received a survey inserted into the Town Report, asking for volunteers to help with the activities.

Two rules guided the implementation phase: involve anyone who wants to help, and let the celebration be as good as Putney wants it to be – no more, no less. This philosophy made for a self-organizing event. Everyone involved decided what s/he wanted to do and set about doing it.

As the date approached, enthusiasm ran high! Preparations during the preceding weeks and days kept everyone in the village busy mowing and trimming their lawns. The street was swept and Don Harlow dressed up the Sacketts Brook bridge with planters furnished by Tom and Nancy Meyer of Progressive Design and flowers donated by John Johnson of Johnson's Greenhouse in Westminster. With the help of Jason Newton and the Fire Dept., Don also devised a watering system to keep the flowers looking healthy throughout the summer.

Under the guidance of Iris Larson, youth from the Putney Family Services summer camp made a large banner announcing the celebration that the town crew hung in front of the Town Hall.



Interviews of elders today, who were children in 1953, brought back their unforgettable experience of decorating bicycles for the parade. Connecting the past to the present, Iris led bicycle decoration workshops so that kids today would have a similar experience and a similar future memory.



Sandglass Theater conducted a sheep-making workshop every morning, August 11 – 15, at the Community Center. A wonderful mix of people of all ages enjoyed the project. Virginia Scholl and John Burt choreographed a sheep dance so that the puppets could entertain the crowd at a parade finale.

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2003



Festivities began on Thursday, August 14, with a book release party held on the porch of the Tavern. The four principle authors signed over 50 copies of *Putney: World's Best Known Small Town*. Beverages were furnished by Mike and Terry's Exit 4 Sunoco, The Putney Co-op, Mountain Paul's General Store, and the Putney General Store. (Thank you Eva Mondon!)

That evening about 200 people enjoyed dinner and dancing at The Putney Inn, food and setting provided by Randi Ziter at cost. Peter Tavalin, Katie Graves, Sean Pentland, and Hayden Lake played

jazz while Bob Burch and Nancy Gagnon gave swing dance lessons.

Photo out-takes from the book hung along a twine fence surrounding the Tavern so that visitors could enjoy some of the pictures that were collected, but not published. Arranged as a photo chronology of Putney in the twentieth century, passers-by could get a quick sense of the events and changes to the town over the last 100 years.



#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 15, 2003

On Friday evening the Putney Public Library prepared a virtual tour of the new library site. About 150 people came out to enjoy the event. Those gathered were invited to walk the floor plan of the new building which had been staked out earlier by architect Pip Bannister. Peter Gould performed his comedy



routine *For the Love of Pie*. Volunteers served delicious pieces of pie made by Elizabeth Harris, Julie Gray, Roger Parrott, Robin Macy, Diane Shamas, Mary Lou Treat, Hep Caldwell, Harriet Tepfer, Charlene Ellis, Bets Wallace, Emilia Bruce, Torin Koester and Virginia Scholl.



More than 80 Descendants of John Kathan, one of the first settlers in Putney and Dummerston, came from all over the country to hold their first nation-wide Kathan family reunion. At 8 pm Rev. Boardman Kathan presented a program at the United Church of Putney on the history of family.

Later Friday evening, the Community Center held a well-attended teen dance, organized by Rosemary Bryant and Laurel Ellis. The dance featured Dummerston's Ben Blomgren as DJ.

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 2003

Everyone was up bright and early on Saturday morning for the 10 am parade. Organized by Marilyn Loomis and her carefully chosen parade committee, the parade was a smashing success that lasted for well over an hour!



A hot summer day, many smiling faces, snatches of festive music as the four marching groups warmed up, all blended together to increase the excitement of a large and diverse assortment of participants. Each band introduced a new section of the parade.



*The American Legion Band*



*A Revival of the Green Mountain Boys*



*Morris Dancers and their Music*



*An Impromptu Samba Band*



Throughout the afternoon the crowd enjoyed food and a myriad of displays and attractions supplied by several local groups and non-profit organizations. Patrick and Annette Spaulding Madden displayed some of the artifacts they have found while diving in the Connecticut River. Their booth featured the underwater video they made in November 2001 of the foundation of the 1812 Putney/Westmoreland bridge.



At 5:30 pm more than 200 people attended the Putney Central School reunion and were treated to hors d'oeuvres, salad, lasagna and dessert provided and served by representatives from the seventh and eighth grade. After dinner, the Senior Singers group from Brattleboro provided entertainment, followed by Larry Cassidy's humorous anecdotes. Brief remarks about the status of the Veterans' Memorial project were given by Laurel Ellis and Laurence Wade after which Jasmine Ziter did the honors of drawing the winning ticket for the benefit 50-50 raffle. The \$1,422 prize went to a delighted Scott Robinson of Newfane.

Later, Fred Breunig readied the Community Center for a square dance when sporadic rain cancelled the outdoor plans. Contra dance "regulars" were joined by "old timers" from the Putney Central reunion and a mix of ages enjoyed the evening. Thank you to Fred, Amy Cann, Laurie Indenbaum, Steve Voorhees, Alan Blood, and Deb Maynard for playing the night away!

### SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2003

On Sunday, everyone was treated to the final concert of the summer on the Tavern Green. From 11 am to 3:30 pm The Stockwell Brothers, Clayton Sabine Band and Sundog Revolutionary Orchestra provided music while Putney Family Services served barbecued chicken and other delights. Town Clerk Anita Coomes and assistant Mary Jones (also garbage collector extraordinaire) smiled as they took in some tunes!



As the music ended, the auction began. Over 50 people bid on a marvelous selection. Gus Williams and Barbara Bousquet donated their services and helped the Center for Creative Healing, Putney Mtn. Assoc., the Library and the Historical Society earn a collective total of \$4,034. The rain held off until the very late afternoon when bid winners and festival-goers went home, weary but happy with the four-day event!

# THE BRIDGE PROJECT

by Lyssa Papazian

The Putney Historical Society is developing the historic grist mill into a museum showcasing Putney's rich mill history on the Sacketts Brook. The mill sits by the side of a road that once continued Water Street across the brook to Mill Street. The bridge was removed several years ago and Water Street is now under heavy industrial use by Putney Paper Company.

Our first step is to re-establish access across the Sacketts Brook from Mill Street. We are presently working with the State of Vermont through its Historic Bridge Program to find and place a salvaged historic bridge from elsewhere in the state here at our site. This program provides a great deal of assistance but we need to raise a match of \$15,000 to make a new bridge a reality.

Lyssa Papazian is organizing the Thwing Mill bridge project. For more information, please call her at (802) 387-2878.



Won't you help? Please make a donation to the Thwing Bridge Fund c/o Putney Historical Society P.O. Box 233 Putney, Vermont 05346

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

*Annual membership in the Putney Historical Society runs from August to July each year. It's time to renew!*

Please PRINT name and address:

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

Additional donations beyond our membership fee are appreciated. The Historical Society has several special projects for 2003-2004 which are listed below. Donations to help support these projects are tax deductible. Make checks payable to: The Putney Historical Society, P.O. Box 233, Putney, VT 05346. Or hand deliver to the Putney Town Hall.

Membership Type: ( ) Senior \$5 ( ) Individual \$15 ( ) Sustaining \$25 ( ) Benefactor \$50 ( ) Patron \$100

Membership Fee	\$ _____
<b>Special Projects</b>	
Thwing Mill	_____
Collections Care	_____
Educational Outreach	_____

I would like to volunteer. You can call me at: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

## A PARADE VIDEO IS IN THE WORKS!

Fern Tavalin is preparing a video of the August parade and a photo CD of the Celebration 2003 activities for the Historical Society. The video will represent the spirit of the parade by using music from the four sections of the parade and a combination of video and still images to bring back the excitement that the parade generated. If you videotaped the parade or took photos during the celebration and would like to contribute your materials to the video or CD, contact Fern via e-mail ([tavalin@sover.net](mailto:tavalin@sover.net)) or phone 387-4277. All photographers will be properly thanked and credited. Look for the finished products in early December!



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