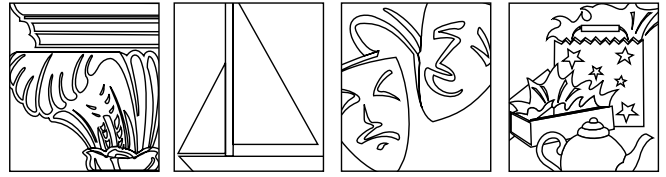


# NEW LONDON MAIN STREET



A Connecticut Main Street Community

Volume 3, No. 3 ■ Summer 2001

## *Main Street Teams Up with Sail New London to Create Major Regional Event: Boats, Books & Brushes*

*By Karen Anderson*


New London Main Street will join Sail New London, Inc. to produce *Boats, Books & Brushes*, the region's first maritime arts festival to be held September 21-23. Highlights of the festival include the 2nd Annual New London Schooner Challenge and a parade of tall ships. The Adventures at Sea literary symposium, featuring

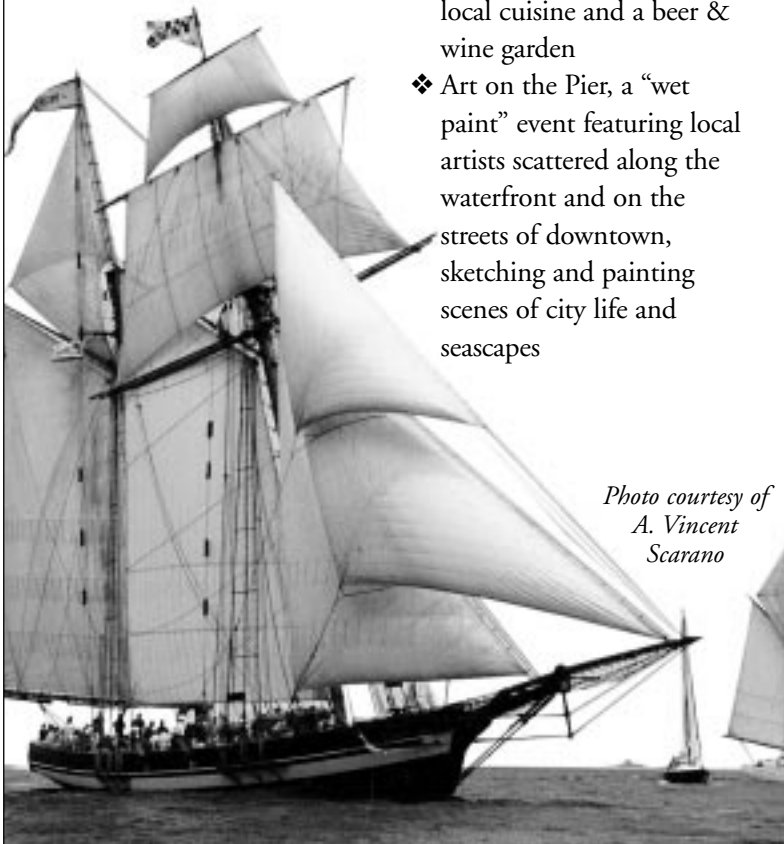
nationally known maritime authors and explorers will kick off the weekend. Art shows, an Arts Stroll and a variety of "hands-on" art projects for children of all ages will round out the event.

New London Main Street will offer an exciting array of activities on Custom House Pier:

- ❖ A Taste on the Pier food court featuring the best of local cuisine and a beer & wine garden
- ❖ Art on the Pier, a "wet paint" event featuring local artists scattered along the waterfront and on the streets of downtown, sketching and painting scenes of city life and seascapes

- ❖ An *En Plein Air* Painting Park, organized by the Florence Griswold Museum, where visitors can come try their talent at painting scenes of the waterfront
- ❖ Music on the Pier: a variety of musical acts will perform throughout the weekend, including the Dick Campo Big Band, Shaded Soul and the U.S. Coast Guard Dixieland Jazz Band

Come and bring your friends and family. The BBB weekend offers Beautiful ships, Bold stories and Bracing artistic opportunities. Don't miss it! 



*Photo courtesy of A. Vincent Scarano*



## DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT RISES

*By Rachel Clement*

New London Main Street reported significant increases in private investment downtown in its semi-annual report to the CT Main Street Center. A survey of building permits and other documents provided by Ned Hammond in the Office of Development and Planning revealed a 56 percent increase in spending on interior and exterior renovations, including building upgrades in plumbing and heating, new roofs and improved signage and facades.

In the six-month period of January to June 2001, private investment rose to \$968,570 from the \$622,805 expended during the same period in 2000. Public improvements declined in the first half of the year to \$12,000 from \$17,500, but the lull followed a period of extraordinary spending in the second half of 2000 due to the completion of the Waterfront Park and preparations for OpSail 2000 CT.

*continued on page 8*

## NEW LONDON MAIN STREET

### New London Main Street Corp.

Tel (860) 444-CITY (2489)

Fax (860) 444-7196

newlondon.mainstreet@snet.net

P.O. Box 1428

14 Eugene O'Neill Dr.

New London, CT 06320

www.newlondonmainstreet.org

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#### PROGRAM STAFF

*Executive Director*

Penny Parsekian

email: ppnlms@snet.net

*Assistant to the Director/ Project*

*Coordinator*

Kristin Havrilla Clarke

email: kcnlms@snet.net

#### NEWSLETTER

*Designer/Publisher*

Angell House Design

*Editor*

Penny Parsekian

*Photographers*

Margaret Palmer Hauschild,

Jim Reid, Kristin Havrilla Clarke

*Distributed with assistance from*

*United Cerebral Palsy of Southeastern*

*Connecticut*

## President's Report

*By Jack Collins, Acting President*

*Dear Friends of NLMS:*

So what did you do on your summer vacation? Well, I started off by sitting in the passenger seat of a Quebec-bound minivan composing this brief message for email transmission to New London. The Internet revolution meets and beats the 5 p.m. deadline (well, almost)!

Speaking of revolution, the NLMS Board of Directors regrettably accepted the resignation of our President, Todd O'Donnell. Business pursuits have stolen Todd from us, and we will sorely miss his leadership. Under our by-laws, I have been named Acting President until the search committee,

ably headed by Bob Sanderson, completes the nomination process and the board elects a new president.

This year marks my 20th year of practicing law in New London at Suisman Shapiro. What will the next two decades – or two years -- of change bring to downtown? Our Vision Committee is finalizing our vision, which will help to define our goals for the near term. As you'll see from the Committee Reports, the committees are actively attempting to change the face of downtown. In addition, we're currently meeting with other downtown organizations, under City Manager Richard



Brown's leadership, to better coordinate our efforts and implement the recent HyettPalma Action Agenda 2001, adopted by City Council as the official downtown revitalization strategy.

Still reading? Good, now here's what you can do. Help us revolutionize downtown. Invest your time, money and talent. Finish reading this newsletter (published with a grant from Pfizer) and call the NLMS office (444-CITY). Join one of our committees, assist at an event and patronize our generous sponsors. Thanks for helping!

## Director's Update

*By Penny Parsekian, Executive Director*

The level of activity in the Main Street office rose a notch with the addition of two summer interns: Rachel Clement, (see page 6) and Nathaniel Dean, a student at Wooster College in Ohio, who became our Trolley Information Station coordinator. With their help, we were able to respond to some exciting opportunities.

One opportunity was the visits of new and bigger cruise ships to our waterfront park. With Rachel coordinating the effort, we printed bags saying, "Welcome to Historic Downtown New London," which Promotion Committee members filled with our beautiful promotional brochures, plus attractive advertising

from downtown member businesses and historic sites. Over the summer, teams of our volunteers greeted nine ships and distributed bags to 565 passengers. Some cruise guests were so thrilled with our hospitality, they decided to stay downtown, rather than take their prepaid bus excursions. Others explored downtown after their excursion. "Meet & Greet" was an unqualified success.

A popular publication included in the bag was Main Street's new downtown dining guide, *New London's Main Streets Are Cookin'*. Economic Restructuring and Promotion did a terrific job describing downtown's 33 eateries and collecting funds to help pay

for the first printing. Another winning Main Street Publication is ER's *Retail Market Analysis*, which was featured in the national *Main Street News*. Emails have arrived from all over the country requesting copies.

Next up will be tackling the exciting projects incorporated in the \$56,000 Frank Loomis Palmer Fund grant we received Aug. 1 and implementing the HyettPalma Action Agenda recently endorsed by City Council. Now all we need are interns as eager as Rachel and Nathaniel, plus more volunteers, to forge ahead!



# The Custom House Museum

## *Beacon on Waterfront Illuminates New London's Maritime History*

*By Melodie Foster, Director*

It has been called New London's best-kept secret, designed to be the city's "ornament on the waterfront" by the first American-born, trained architect, Robert Mills. A mandatory stop for all ships passing through New London during the city's golden era, the U.S. Custom House on Bank Street has stood watch over the city's maritime activities for over 160 years.

Have you entered the doors of what is, in fact, the nation's oldest, continuously operating custom house? The New London Maritime Society offers tours of this

beautiful Greek Revival building, and the maritime history museum housed here, every Wednesday and Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. In addition, the Society's expanding library and archival collections of unique materials on local maritime topics are available to researchers by appointment.

Images in these collections indicate that a pier was located where the alley connecting Bank and Water streets is today. The backyard to the building was created when the railroad pushed the waterfront away from the Custom House in the mid-19th century.

Today, the Society has just completed construction of a courtyard in this space. Adjacent to the new Waterfront Park, the courtyard is part of our contribution to the beautification of the waterfront and provides an ideal place to hold outdoor events. As part of the *Boats, Books & Brushes* maritime arts festival that will enliven the waterfront in September, the New London Maritime Society will sponsor an exhibition featuring marine paintings by three generations of local impressionist painters, the White family, and their mentors.

The Custom House has long represented the ideal of New London as a strong, prosperous and beautiful city. The New London Maritime Society continues this tradition, working to establish a place where tourists, students and neighbors can learn about and celebrate New London's glorious maritime heritage.

*The New London Maritime Society provides local organizations the use of the Custom House for meetings, lectures and receptions. It hosts events in its lecture hall and gallery, which can accommodate approximately 60 people.*

## Special Recognition Reception for Major Sponsors held at Custom House

In April, the Robert Mills Custom House provided an elegant setting for a reception to recognize New London Main Street's major sponsors. During the wine-and-hors d'oeuvres event, sponsors received framed copies of Robert Hauschild's poster "The New Century on the Parade." Included in Executive Director Penny Parsekian's welcome remarks was the announcement of a new sponsor benefit: direct links to the New London Main Street Web site.

In addition to having an

opportunity to socialize, attendees enjoyed tours of the historic building given by Custom House President Benjamin Martin and Director Melodie Foster. Reception guests included Lori Hadley-Lindfors of Citizens Bank, City Councilors Lloyd Beachy, Tim West and Rob Pero, Ken Kitchings of Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of Southeastern New England, Stan Mikus of Cross Sound Ferry, Mary-Jane McGinnis and Eileen Koster of The Day, Dan Brannegan and Deb Gabriel of Pfizer, Rogean Makowski of Washington Trust, Roberta

Sroka of the Waterford Hotel Group and a number of Main Street board members.

Although representatives from City Center District, the Community Foundation, Fleet Bank, M.J. Sullivan, the Palmer Fund and Mohegan Sun were unable to attend, all received posters via personal visits, which help us to stay in touch. Thanks to our key sponsors, Main Street is moving forward in its work on downtown revitalization.



# COMMITTEE REPORTS

Pick a project from the committee reports below and call the Main Street office at 444-2489 to learn how to get involved

## Design Committee

Ronnie Hodge, Chair

The Design Committee will hold its first Fall Cleaning on Sept. 8 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a rain date of Sept. 15. Invitations to participate have been sent to businesses, organizations, colleges and local government officials. The plan is for work teams to “attack” various zones of the downtown. Headquarters will be located behind the Trolley Information Station on Eugene O’Neill Drive.

Recently, Design committee members met with representatives from Healthy New London, the City Health Dept., Public Works, the Office of Planning and Development, and merchants to exchange ideas on ways to promote a clean, healthy downtown. Some of the ideas entertained by the group were creating a brochure to instill pride and provide essential information to property owners and renters, such as the schedule for garbage pick-up and street sweeping.

Want to know what’s going on in New London? Check out the “New London Gazette window” on State Street. Each month Heather Grigsby has the *Gazette* Monthly Calendar blown up and installs it in a window of the Cronin Building on lower State Street. To promote downtown businesses, Heather recently started displaying local merchandise. Last month, all of the items displayed from Yesterday’s Treasures were sold right out of the window. Great job Heather!



## Organization Committee

Tim Anderson and Dee Rigg, Co-Chairs

The Organization Committee is currently preparing a Work Plan for the new fiscal year. The goal is to have projects in the plan that will support the Vision Statement currently being developed by the Board of Directors.

We are also in the midst of a formal membership campaign. Over 200 membership renewal letters were sent out in July, with 47 renewals to date. Membership solicitation letters were sent out to nearly 400 volunteers, along with a “skills and interests” survey to help us match volunteers and projects.

Organization will be developing a PowerPoint presentation on New London Main Street. The presentation will incorporate material from the National Main Street Center, but focus on our local program. It will be used to recruit new members and inform businesses and civic organizations about New London Main Street’s goals and strategies.

And finally, we continue to expand our Web Site ([www.newlondonmainstreet.org](http://www.newlondonmainstreet.org)), which now includes a sponsor page and a downtown New London businesses page. These pages will be linked to the Web sites of our sponsors and member businesses.



## Promotion Committee

Kathy Diaz-Saavedra, Chair

The Promotion Committee is busily planning the Fall Festival, which takes place in conjunction with Sail New London’s *Boats Books & Brushes* maritime arts festival (see page 1). Citizen’s Bank is currently our exclusive sponsor. We are also making plans for an October Merchants Mixer, featuring downtown health and beauty businesses.

Other projects on our Work Plan include updating and re-printing the *Historic New London Map & Guide* and the downtown dining guide, newly introduced this spring, featuring downtown’s 33 eateries. The committee is currently seeking someone to work with the restaurant owners on the update. Both guides are distributed at area visitor centers, hotels, festivals, fairs, and to visiting cruise ship passengers.

A subcommittee has just begun to plan this year’s *Celebration of Lights & Song*. This annual tree-lighting and caroling festival is a key event for New London Main Street. In addition to the traditional performance of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Chorus, elements in the works include a holiday crafts market, a non-profit marketplace for holiday giving, trolley bus rides, youth choirs on street corners, model railroads in empty store windows and a sidewalk vender selling roasted chestnuts. All depends on how many elves we have to help us!



## Economic Restructuring Committee

Gail M. Bartelli, Chair

The Economic Restructuring Committee works to develop a market strategy for downtown that will result in an improved retail mix, a stronger tax base, increased investor confidence and a stable role for downtown as a major contributor to New London’s economy.

Our key focus for the coming months is business retention – efforts to help our downtown businesses survive and flourish. New London Main Street received a \$56,000 Frank Loomis Palmer Fund grant, which includes funding to bring in a retail expert and motivational speaker who will rally our small-business community and offer comprehensive evaluations and recommendations regarding customer service, window display, pricing and marketing techniques. During the next few months our committee will be working to find the right consultant and create an event that will attract and engage the target audience.



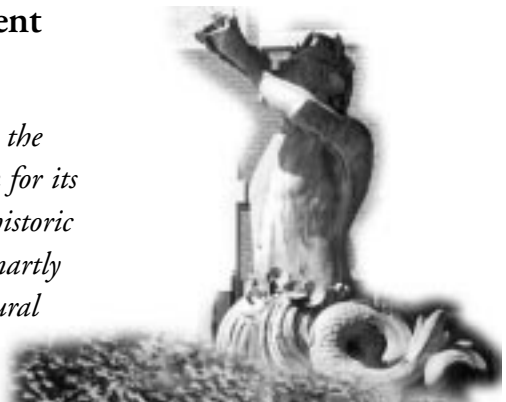
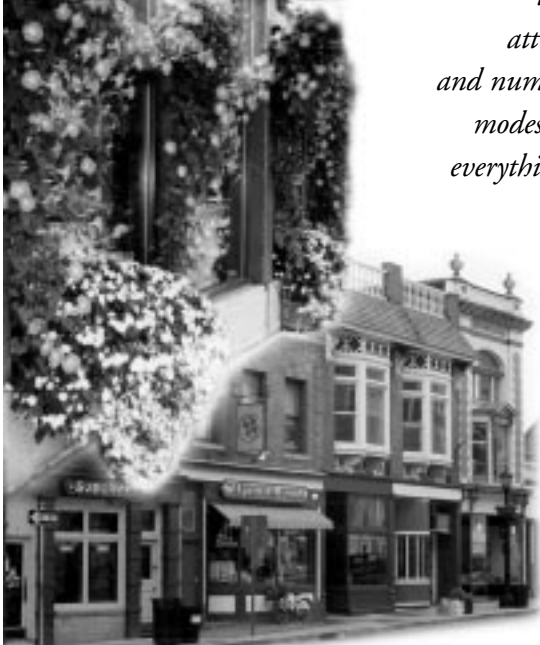
# V I S U A L I Z E T H I S !

## Vision Committee Crafts Statement on Downtown's Future:

*New London's Historic Waterfront District is the regional center of commerce and culture, known for its arts scene, vibrant ethnic mix, hospitality and historic charm. Clean, well-lit streets are lined with smartly renovated buildings that reflect the architectural styles of diverse periods. Fountains and sculpture grace public plazas and pocket parks. Flowers cascade from planters, and cobbled alleys lead to the harbor and waterfront esplanade.*

*The District is a magnet for travelers, lured from the expanded transportation center by the enticing vistas, unique shops, restaurants and ethnic bistros.*

*In addition to serving City office workers and shoppers from throughout the region, the District attracts students, who frequent the cafes and numerous nightspots. Urban dwellers, living in modest efficiency apartments, townhouses and everything in between, enjoy the convenience and excitement of city life.*



## DON'T MISS THESE DATES!

**September 8**  
*The First Ever Fall Cleaning*, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., headquarters behind Trolley Station, Eugene O'Neill Dr.

**September 21-23**  
*Boats, Books & Brushes*

**October 22**  
*Merchants Mixer: Discover the Downtown Spa*, 5:30-7 p.m. BackStage Therapies, 228 State St.

**October date to be announced**  
*Trolley Year-End Thank You Party*  
 stay tuned for details

**December 7**  
*Celebration of Lights & Song*

## V I V A V O L U N T E E R S !

## My Morning at the Trolley Information Station

By Sue Evans

"INFORMATION." That is what the blue and white signs around town advertise. Follow them, and you wind up at the Trolley Information Station at the corner of Golden Street and Eugene O'Neill Drive. Information is what the volunteers at the Station provide. However, as a volunteer, I also receive information, immersing myself in the wealth of material available there. I love checking out the brochures covering everything imaginable about the New London/Mystic area. There are also great maps, schedules of special events, and even menus from many of

the local restaurants.

There is something about the Trolley Station that is welcoming. It is a cozy place where I just feel good spending a few hours each Wednesday morning. Every shift is different, and the visitors to the Station varied and always appreciative of our efforts to help. I am constantly surprised at the large number of visitors who find our little building. They come from all over the United States and from many other countries as well. Often people are in a big hurry, because they are late and need directions to the ferries or the train, but most

people take their time, browsing through the pamphlets and asking questions about what to do in New London. It is usually easy to think of something to satisfy the varied interests of the visitors. I have had requests for places of historic interest, the IRS, gas stations, furniture stores, directions to I-95, and the nearest bathroom and telephone. But the most often asked question is where to get good seafood!



Sue Evans assists visitor (below) and checks a map with volunteer Deena Gordon (above).

## An Internship *Not* for Dummies

By Rachel Clement

It was made clear to me at the beginning of the summer that this internship wouldn't be like most others. I was glad to hear that, considering I didn't want to spend eight hours a day copying papers and stuffing envelopes. I wanted to get things done, and that's exactly what Executive Director Penny Parsekian had in mind.

My official title was Volunteer Coordinator, and my job description primarily involved making the existing

database functional for the office, then launching a membership campaign. I also recruited volunteers for many of this summer's events and compiled a study on downtown investment. Since the database was my chief concern, I worked on that for the majority of my time, always armed with a copy of *Access 97 for Windows for Dummies*, and the computer expertise of Jim Reid and Tim Anderson just a phone call away.

This internship taught me

so much, not only valuable experience using new computer programs, but also practical knowledge, such as how to make ideas jotted down on paper happen and the necessity of having more than one plan of action. I was also able to meet many wonderful people who shared with me their insights on downtown revitalization and how New London has changed over the years.

This fall, I am taking a leave of absence from Mary Washington College, where I



have completed two years of study in Spanish and Geography. I will be moving to Washington, DC, to participate in AmeriCorps, a dream of mine for the past few years. My experience at New London Main Street will serve me well in this new challenge.



# Take a look at what Main Street has been up to this *Spring & Summer*

## APRIL



▲ Robert Hauschild's new Main Street poster is unveiled at the opening of the Waterfront Park.



▲ Spreading Spring Fever with music, dance, kids activities, flower market and retail specials.

◀ Sweeping, weeding and removing 90 bags of trash for Spring Cleaning.

## MAY



Recognizing and thanking volunteers and our generous benefactors at Annual Meeting.



## JUNE



▲▶ Welcoming weekly cruise ship passengers to the waterfront park with goody bags and a smile.



▲ Hosting the Caravan StageBarge tall ship theatre in our waterfront park.

▲ Networking and noshing at a Merchants' Mixer at the Hygienic (noshing compliments of Nathaniel's).

*Will it ever  
slow down?  
We hope not!*

**Downtown Investment**

*continued from page 1*

Several new businesses and one agency have opened in downtown during the period, including Kaeser Instruments, Jackalope Audio, Inter Bridge Networking, Sculpture, SeaPony, the Original Beverage Company, and the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America. In addition to filling empty storefronts, these businesses have brought increased foot traffic downtown and have added a part-time and eight full-time jobs to the downtown work force.

**IT TAKES A WHOLE TOWN TO MAKE OUR DOWNTOWN WORK!**

Please complete and return form with membership fee to: New London Main Street Corporation  
14 Eugene O'Neill Dr., P.O. Box 1428, New London, CT 06320

Please Check One  Individual \$20  Family \$30  
 Supporter/Small Business \$50-149  Patron/Corporation \$150-250

Are you interested in serving on a Main Street committee?

If so, please check one or more of the four committees, and a member will contact you:

- Design  Economic Restructuring  Promotions  Organization
- With my Main Street membership, please send me a New London Main Street poster for only \$10.00 plus \$2.81 postage and handling.
- I am not interested in membership; please send me a New London Main Street poster for \$15.00 plus \$2.81 postage and handling.

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

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Eve \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW AND OLD MEMBERS!**

**New Members**

**Individual/Family**

Mary Beth Baker  
Richard Berdan  
Cathy Brown  
Eleanor Butler  
Tom & Ann Carroll  
Theresa Dannaher  
John & Anne Hunziker  
Wade Hyslop  
Carmelina Kanzler  
Mark Matson  
Cheryl Pappas  
Lisa Perrin  
Geraldine Phillips  
Mary Ann Root  
Sally Ryan  
Helene Shafman

**Supporter/Small Business**

Bob & Zita Smith  
Rafel & Barbara Strong  
Kerin Woods & Karl Sternlof  
Bank Street Mobil  
Barun Basu Associates  
Community Partnerships  
Ernie's Café  
First Step, Inc.  
Kente Cultural Center  
Mitchell College  
Suisman, Shapiro, Wool, Brennan, Gray & Greenberg, P.C.

**Membership Renewals**

**Individual/Family**

Frances Baratz  
Armand & Elizabeth Beaudette  
Marion Bodde  
Sandra Chalk  
Kristin & Shane Clarke  
Kathy Diaz-Saavedra  
Richard & Yvonne Duffus  
Winifred Flint  
Edgar Forest  
Howard & Deena Gordon  
Paul Greene  
Heather & Rick Grigsby  
Robert Hauschild &

**Supporter/Small Business**

Margaret Palmer  
Dorothy Hazard  
Ronnie Hodge  
Armand Lambert  
Elizabeth Lengyel  
Robert MacDonald  
Betty McCarthy  
Christina Moore  
Stephanie Morton & Che Cartafalsa  
Dee Ortiz-Rigg  
Penny Parsekian & Geoff Kaufman  
Naomi Paulson  
Alma Peterson  
Robert & Barbara Place  
Scott Ross  
Ernest & Gabrielle Schlesinger

**Supporter/Small Business**

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Bob & Ronna Stuller  
Alma Verbillo  
Karen Ward  
Peggy Warnken  
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Patricia Williams-Jones  
John & Margaret Winthrop  
Akins Marketing & Design  
Anastacia's  
Tim & Karen Anderson  
Andrews, Cosgrove, Young & Geraghty, P.C.  
Devine Planning

**Patron/Corporation**

Valeda & Robert Grills  
Mariani & Reck  
Miner & Silverstein L.L.P.  
Nancy's Salon  
Nathaniel's Restaurant  
Roberts Audio/Video  
Bob & Mary Sanderson  
SeaPony L.L.C.  
Star Cutters  
The Oldham Publishing Service  
Ed Bartelli, Inc.  
Carolyn & Co.  
David Hayes  
St. James Episcopal Church

*An Extra Special thank you to United Cerebral Palsy for hours of envelope stuffing and stamp sticking. Great job UCP!*



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