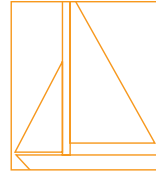


NEW LONDON MAIN STREET



A Connecticut Main Street Community

www.newlondonmainstreet.org

Volume 6, No. 3 ■ Fall 2004

Painting the Town

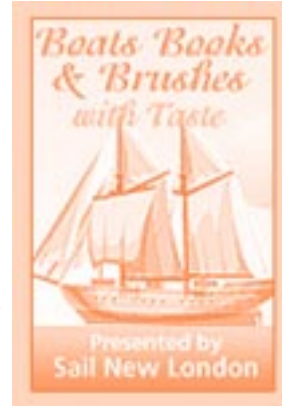
Wet Paint Week will start with a splash – of paint on canvas, of course – on Saturday, September 4. During the week leading up to New London's maritime and culinary arts festival, Boats, Books & Brushes, Wet Paint artists will be found in the nooks and crannies of the Historic Waterfront District, gazing and squinting at a scene only they can see. To watch as their visions emerge is an exciting past time for all who visit the district.

Participating artists will be identified, not only by their brushes and palettes, but by the canvas tote bags embroidered by Marcus with the logo of event sponsor Dime Bank and lovingly emblazoned with the words Wet Paint Week by committee Chair Martha Schwarzkopf and her husband Eric.

Artists will hang their finished works on the Saturday of the festival in the gallery tent located on City Pier Plaza. On Sunday,

before noon, they will enter one of their pieces in the competition for prizes. Karen Barthelson, Interim Director of the Mystic Art Center, will judge the entries from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Winners will be announced at 3:00 p.m.

Artists can still register at either the Main Street office or, across the street, at Randstad, 115 State St., where Martha is the branch manager. The registration fee is \$25, and checks should be made payable to New London Main Street. Everyone else should mark their calendars to be sure not to miss the experience of having a familiar site transformed by seeing it through the eyes of the artist.

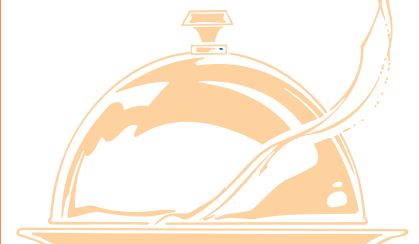


SEPTEMBER 10-12

Let's Do the Stroll!

Have you ever wanted to try some of the many restaurants in the district but just couldn't break away from your usual haunts? Here's your chance: Wednesday, October 20, New London Main Street will hold its first Waterfront District Food Stroll. Most, if not all, of the 32 eateries in the district will be offering tastes of their signature dishes, the dishes that make their regular customers come back again and again. Patterned after the popular Federal Hill Food Stroll in Providence, the New London stroll will allow button or passport holders to partake of the samples in each restaurant and cafe. A committee headed Susan Gorra Heinemann is working out the details and trying to keep the cost down to \$25, which includes a drink coupon. The new downtown dining guide will be released the same night, so strollers can mark their favorites.

The event will benefit New London Main Street. The Providence stroll sells out every year, so be sure to sign up early!



It takes a whole town to make our downtown work!

NEW LONDON MAIN STREET

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NEWSLETTER

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President's Perspective

When out-of-town visitors to our downtown inquire



about places to live in the district, we know we have arrived. We have crossed

the threshold of apathy and doubts about the downtown. We have been successful in attracting new businesses, investors in residential projects, restaurants, places for education and entertainment and above all in providing a safe and clean downtown.

Behind the success are the many volunteers and the staff

who are the pride and joy of this great waterfront city. This is the city with 'a heart' for all the non-profit establishments of the region, which provides a forum for citizens of the region through New London Main Street. NLMS has been the recipient of many awards from the Connecticut Main Street Center for its excellence in management and leadership in grass roots efforts in the community.

However, a great deal remains to be accomplished in keeping up the momentum. The Economic Restructuring Committee is geared up to add to the 'ECONOMIC VALUE' of the downtown. The Design Committee is ready with creative solutions to add to the 'PHYSICAL VALUE' of the downtown. The Organization

Committee under enlightened leadership will continue to add to the 'CIVIC VALUE'. The enhancement of the 'SOCIAL VALUE' has been the result of massive efforts by the Promotion Committee, and the work will continue.

The recent reversal of funding support from the city has added to our resolve to work with increased vigor with city agencies towards the additional economic growth of the district. Our collaboration with various downtown groups has been rewarding for the district businesses and landlords, and we are firmly committed to bring together all the constituencies in our role as lead partner for the development and maintenance of the downtown.

Barun Basu

Executive Director's Update

It's great to belong to a national professional organization that provides solid information and training to help us in this complex business of downtown revitalization. A good example of this benefit was the 2004 National Main Streets Conference, held in Albuquerque, NM, May 9-12. I attended this year specifically to explore the possibilities for New London Main Street to develop closer ties with other organizations and agencies operating in the district, such as City Center District (CCD), the New London Development Corp. (NLDC) and city agencies. How might we consolidate the many entities with overlapping missions and activities?

The Main Street program

in Albuquerque, and in several other communities, is under the umbrella of the Business Improvement District, which, in our case, would be CCD. One of my discoveries was that this organizational model was in flux everywhere. Those using it considered it a work in progress, not something to recommend nationally. There were significant pros and cons to joining forces, as well as keeping the groups separate, but I now have some tools for evaluating what might be optimal here, and we should examine the possibilities for the sake of increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Some of the more exciting sessions I attended covered: the impact our small, independently owned and operated businesses have on the economic health of our region



From left, Penny, John Simone of the CMSC, Sarah Floroski of Simsbury and Bob MacDougall of Portland, CT at the opening reception.

and the rationale for the community as a whole to support them; how a district logo might help us to market ourselves; specifics on the heritage tourism market and strategies for renting difficult spaces to tenants who will enhance the district. The revitalization is moving forward, but we need this expertise to keep on track, and the National and CT Main Street centers continue to give us this thoughtful and tested strategic help.

Penny Parsekian

SPOTLIGHT ON SUPPORTERS

Worth a Dime ... and Much More

Dime Bank Sponsors Wet Paint Week

Since Dime Bank opened its newest branch in New London last February, it has been seeking ways to connect with the community. A supporter of New London Main Street even before it moved into the city, the bank naturally sought to get involved with one of Main Street's many activities. Wet Paint Week was just the thing, according to Melissa Colli, who saw the event listed in the Main Street sponsorship brochure. Thanks to Dime Bank, the artists will have handy canvas totes to transport their paints and brushes to their chosen locations for painting outdoors. They will also have a gallery tent on the festival site, fitted out with display panels for showcasing the finished works.

Dime Bank was drawn to New London by the bank's own customer base, explains

Branch Manager Meg Polubiatko. "We wanted to come to New London for a long time," she says. "We had a lot of customers in the area, and the closest branch was in East Lyme."

The branch has a staff of six full-time employees, two of whom are fluent in Spanish, Polubiatko says. It's the only branch that has its own commercial lender to serve the growing New London business community.

"Our biggest thing is customer service," Says Polubiatko. "We strive for it. We want to stay a community bank. When you call, you get a real person, and we hope our personal service will sepa-



Branch Manager Meg Polubiatko stands beside a ship model in the new Dime Bank branch at 668 Bank Street in New London.

rate us from the rest."

Polubiatko points to the bank's long experience as another of its strengths. "We've been around since 1869," she says, "and the original building in Norwich still operates as a bank." She says bank President James Cronin is dedicated to this icon of the bank's past. A love of history will certainly help forge a strong connection for the bank with the Historic Waterfront District of New London and the Main Street program.



NEW LONDON MAIN STREET

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Southeastern CT

New London Main Street Lends Support to National Transportation Conference



State Senate President Donald E. Williams, a proponent of rail transit, will speak at the conference.

New London Main Street is backing the National Corridors Initiative and the Sierra Club who are organizing a national conference on transportation to take place in New London September 18-19 at the Radisson Hotel. In making the decision to support the conference, Barun Basu, President of New London Main Street, noted that transportation policy and downtown revitalization are intimately linked. Without the highway system, and the transportation policies that built it, strip and mall developments, which devastated downtowns in the 1970s, would not have happened. Cities lost their roles, not only as commercial centers, but as transportation hubs. The conference will be attended by

city planners, urban designers, traffic engineers, landscape architects, economists and those allied with the resurgence of inner cities as places to live and work.

Today, with open space being consumed by highway and sprawl development and the resulting negative impacts on the quality of life and health, the Sierra Club and the National Corridors Initiative believe it's time for change. The conference will explore the proposition of redirecting federal and state gas



continued on page 6

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

Promotion

Penny Parsekian, Acting Chair

Thanks to Deirdre Cavanagh, a flaming orange Events Calendar, listing activities in the district from late August to December can be found in shops throughout the district. The card has been popular with merchants, residents and visitors alike. Alva Gallery is the sponsor.

The popular downtown dining guide is due for an update, and Tambria Moore is in charge. She will be approaching all 32 eateries in the district to get new descriptions, hours of operation and funds for printing. The new guide will be released on the night of the Waterfront District Food Stroll (see pg. 1).

The Celebration of Lights & Song by the Sea hit a lull in August after a roaring July. The CT Humanities Council awarded a \$5,000 grant to begin the planning for a living history play set at the Hempstead Houses, Shaw-Perkins Mansion and U.S. Customs House (see Spring 2004 newsletter, pg. 4). Chair Kathy Diaz-Saavedra and the administrators of the historic sites met with Flock Theatre, which will script, act and direct the production. The ice carving and gingerbread village components of the festival have chairs, but the People's Choice Holiday Decorating Contest might need leadership. December 4th is the festival, while the play will take place over two weekends.

Please consider joining us on the third Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. at the Main Street office to see where you might fit into one of these wonderful projects!

Design

Liz Suson & Penny Parsekian, Interim Co-Chairs

The heritage trail project is taking shape as committee member Heather Grigsby and New London Landmarks Archivist Sylvia Malizia begin working on text and graphic details for the 30 sites they have identified for plaques. They are hoping to order the plaques by the end of September. Board member Bill Cornish has vol-

unteered to help with the bidding process if the City allows a private contractor to do the installation, which is slated for spring.

Decorative banners are planned for the front façade of One Union Plaza to dress up the sidewalk area and help identify the location of the Main Street office, with help from committee member Scott Ross. The next steps are getting the details together and meeting with city regulators.



Vertical banners in Portland, OR dress up a building and inspire a similar look for One Union Plaza.

Phase II of the City Lights project begins this fall as sub-committee Chair Gail Bartelli calls her team together. The goal is to light the crowns of the remaining buildings and two historic churches on State and Bank streets.

Planning will soon begin for new light pole banners to be installed in April. Sub-committee Chair Ronnie Hodge will be calling her troops together at the end of August to review last year's process and, in September, begin working on the new design.

Finally, the Commemorative Bench program, under Paul Foley's leadership, has sold four more cleat benches, leaving a total of four cleats and no wooden benches available. The committee will be considering design projects on which to spend the balance of the funds raised through this effort.

For those interested in the appearance of the district and willing to lend a hand, please join us on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Main Street office.



Maasdam passengers shop on Bank Street.

Economic Restructuring

Jerry Sinnamon, Chair

The visit on May 14 by Holland America's *Maasdam* taught us a lot about how attractive New London is for passengers from across the U.S. interested in exploring ports of call in New England. New London's unique mix of history, architecture, shops and ambiance, all in a relatively small footprint, was an appreciated and enjoyable experience for the 500 or so *Maasdam* passengers who had the opportunity to visit.

With *Maasdam's* scheduled return on Wednesday October 27 for a full 11 hours, the Economic Restructuring Committee will be focusing on the questions: What can we do to make visits by *Maasdam* passengers be even more enjoyable and satisfying? What did our merchants find successful in attracting business from the many passengers who visited? How can more of our downtown businesses take advantage of the October visit of *Maasdam*? How can we translate this experience into preparing for future events so that full advantage can be gained from the time, energy and resources New London has committed to the preservation of its history?

The Economic Restructuring Committee encourages individuals who would like to help in developing answers to these questions to join us on the third Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at the Main Street office or send us your comments for inclusion in our conversations.

Organization

Kerin Woods was elected at the July meeting to chair the committee, and Tambria Moore graciously agreed to serve as committee secretary. As of July 1, New London Main Street had 90 current members. A membership renewal drive is currently underway, led by Membership Chair Deena Gordon. The drive is targeting both members who have not renewed and potential new members. Deena Gordon and other Organization Committee members, along with Database Manager KB Bryant, developed a list of 500 prospects. The Committee's goal is to increase membership to 200 by the end of September 2004.

In addition to focusing its energies on membership growth, the Organization Committee is in the process of forming a sub-committee to improve the format of the Web page. Although the site has been very successful, with an average of about 900 hits a day, users and Web host Joyce Thomas of Bizgrok Web Design have suggested a redesign to make the site easier to navigate. We are also seeking writers for the newsletter. Finally, the Committee is undertaking an update of its workplan for the current fiscal year.

The committee meets monthly on the fourth Monday at 5:00 p.m. at the Main Street office. Come help us with the newsletter, the Web site and with new projects as we update our plan. All are welcome.



WHAT'S NEW

A Garden of Delights

By Kerin M. Woods

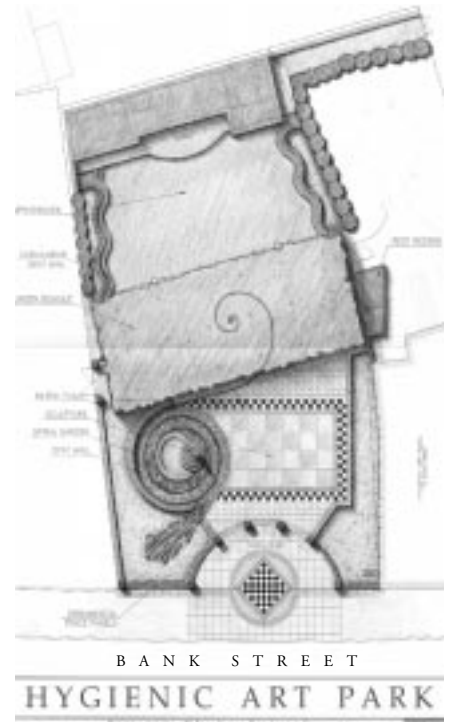
As anyone who has driven on Bank Street can see, work on the Hygienic Art Garden has begun. The garden, designed by Brian Kent Associates of Mystic, incorporates the classical Greek motif of the building and its mural. Kent, a licensed landscape architect, explains that the park is intended to be a complete work of art in itself. The park will consist of a series of four outdoor spaces: the forecourt adjacent to Bank Street, the mural plaza, the bosque and the amphitheater.

The mural plaza, which is 30 by 60 feet, will consist of paving based on the mural's classical content, with seating walls designed by Jenn Collins, an artist in residence at the Hygienic. The mural plaza also will include a sculpture, which will be part of a water feature, of a bronze female nude created by Reneé Rhodes, who has exhibited at the Hygienic. The plaza will be able to accommodate a tent for social functions.

The bosque will consist of trees pruned to create a canopy that will form a high, green wall along the back of the mural plaza and provide a shady area with moveable tables and chairs from which to view the amphitheater. The amphitheater will consist of an architectural background on a low stage and a band shell. A lawn area will provide space for seating, and evergreen hedges will enclose the sides. Paul McMasters is overseeing the stage construction.

Excavation of the park site began in June, uncovering numerous historical artifacts, including glass jars and granite foundation stones. The primary constructed elements of the garden are expected to be in place before winter. The grand opening will take place in the spring.

Hygienic Board Director Vincent Scarano anticipates that the garden will be a quasi-public park, open during gallery hours and spe-



The Hygienic Art Garden, with funds from the State Bonding Commission, City Center District, Downtown New London Association, the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund and others, will move from conception to realization in the spring.

cial events. Scarano states that the park, by its multiple offerings of art, botanical garden, and outdoor theater, will engage the community in possible botanical projects with the University of Connecticut Master Gardener program and students from New London High School. Scarano also hopes to hold outdoor lunch-time classical concerts, theater presented by local groups, and film festivals. The Hygienic Art Garden also will be made available to rent for private events. Scarano stated that the Hygienic Art Garden is an effort to revitalize downtown by transforming a parking lot into a beautiful space for public enjoyment. It is a much anticipated and welcome addition to the Historic Waterfront District.



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

Jerry Sinnamon: A Will with a Way

By *Tambria Moore*

On the bank of the Thames River, on the deck of Muddy Waters Café, Jerry Sinnamon sat down to tell me about himself. He is the founder and owner of Be On Purpose, an executive coaching and consulting firm with a mission to “inspire individuals and organizations to create transcendent coherence, effectiveness, joy and fulfillment.” His business was created in response to a long and successful career providing effective leadership in health care planning and development.



That Jerry makes leadership a matter of course is most noticeable in his civic service. He is the President of the Board of Literacy Volunteers of Eastern CT, Vice President of the Board of the Connecticut Chapter of the International Federation of Coaches and sits on the Allocation Panel of United Way of Southeastern CT. In addition, Jerry is transferring his vision to New London Main Street as the Chair of the Economic Restructuring Committee. I learned Jerry definitely has a purpose.

Born and raised in Newburg, NY, he describes his journey to New London two years ago as “serendipitous”. He was living in Hartford when his condo went on the market. He started his new home search by visiting Connecticut state parks. Harkness Park caught his attention and from

there, the city of New London. Today, he calls an apartment on Willets’ Ave. home.

One of the reasons Jerry adopted our city was the local ferry system. As a child, his parents often used the Newburg ferry ride as a reward. “Three miles out and back,” he fondly reminisced as he gazed at our Fishers Island ferry below. “In 1964 they built the bridge that ended those rides.” So Jerry is now rewarding himself with a multiple choice of ferry transportation.

Cities interest Jerry. They are “a bed of the genesis of inventions and ideas,” he says. “Not the Federal government, it is the cities. It takes a vibrant city to create a vibrant society.” Jerry’s purpose with New London Main Street is not to let setbacks get the citizens down or allow development to become “mired in the muck”. To him, a sufficient number of people with a picture of something extraordinary happening are necessary to this purpose. He describes himself as a cheerleader and steward of the visions New London Main Street works so hard to develop.

Experience is why Jerry is working so hard. New London Main Street is important because “You need someone who spends all of his or her time on New London historical preservation” – trying to make it work without tearing it down. Preservation is “good for economic development...it can’t get lost, it must be at the fore.” In his hometown, this was not the case. Once a grand city with vistas of the river, a park designed by one of Central Park’s designers and architecture similar to New London, it is now decayed. “Today, you just wouldn’t



want to go there.”

Initially, Jerry joined the Economic Restructuring Committee to assist with preparation for the cruise ship *Maasdam*. He continues to be very cognizant of how valuable that first visit was and how important future visits will become to our economy. It’s a happy meeting of purposes: the opportunity to boost the local merchants and the city, and the satisfaction of the passengers who are interested in our history, art, culture and merchandise. Just as his own business tries to help discover and realize potentials, Jerry believes Main Street’s continuing series of “Don’t Miss the Boat” meetings with local merchants will do the same for downtown.

Touching on recent community controversy about the future of Sailfest, Jerry says he understands all the party’s views. “It was a great idea when it started. It filled a void. If it is not meeting the community’s majority interest, it should be modified to do so and yet still capitalize on the existing traffic generated by the largest fireworks show in the state. The issue is definitely resolvable.”

Jerry sees potential in the waterfront district’s future. “New London is a nice size city that’s easy to get my hands around with plenty of historical character.”



Transportation Conference

continued from page 3

tax resources to transit options. The key to an efficient and sustainable transportation system, the organizers say, is a balance between mass transit, which includes rail, bus and ferry, and the automobile.

Michael Dukakis, former Amtrak

chairman and Presidential candidate, is the keynote speaker. A proposal for a pilot project in southeastern Connecticut will be unveiled. A rail inspection tour to Putnam is offered the day after the conference.

Conference hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 18, followed by a reception at Union Station Center. The

cost is \$145 for non-profit organizations and individuals, \$195 for government and \$450 for corporate admission. The cost of the rail tour is \$45. New London Main Street members will receive a \$45 discount off the combined price of the conference and the tour. For more information, visit the Main Street Web site or www.nationalcorridors.org.



New London Spring and Summer Highlights



MAY

Hundreds of happy cruise ship passengers toured the district during the May 14 visit of the Maasdam, with a welcoming reception at Union Station, shops open early and the enticement of a history trail laid out in the new map & guide.



At the Seventh Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony at Thames River Wine & Spirits on May 27, Ronnie Hodge awarded Scott Ross Volunteer of the Year for Design, and Susan Hendricks got frisky with the merchandise! Congratulations to meeting Chair Tim Anderson and Annual Report "sales rep" Ann Schmidt.



JUNE

Sandy Chalk and Susan Gorra Heine-man accepted the awards for the Promotion and Fundraiser committees at the CT Main Street Center's Annual Meeting in Hartford on June 7, and Bob Stuller basked as the New London Volunteer the Year.



Celebrate Regatta kicked off the summer season on June 12, with double decker bus rides and a concert by the New London High School Wind Orchestra.



APRIL-AUGUST

Economic Restructuring brought merchants together on five occasions to provide information on large events taking place in the district. The Radisson and the New London Antiques Center hosted these lively meetings.



WELCOME TO MEMBERS WHO JOINED OR RENEWED THIS SUMMER

INDIVIDUAL

- Frances Baratz
- Michel Belt
- Trix Bodde
- Sharyn Burke Montalbano
- Eleanor Butler
- Larry Caruso
- Peg Curtin
- Katherine Diaz-Saavedra
- Deborah Donovan
- Helen Dutko
- Paul Foley
- Paul Greene
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- Scott Ross
- Sarah Ryan
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- Eleanor Suplee
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- Karen Ward

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Please Check One Individual \$20 Family \$30 Supporter/Small Business \$50-249
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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

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Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: Day _____ Eve _____

email: _____

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