

NEW LONDON MAIN STREET



A Connecticut Main Street Community

www.newlondonmainstreet.org

Volume 7, No. 3 ■ Fall 2005

Look Out for Wet Paint!

By Jean Brown

The beauty of our downtown Historic Waterfront District will be captured once again by area artists during Wet Paint Week, September 10 to 18. New London Main Street's Wet Paint Week contest, sponsored by Citizens Bank, leads up to, and is part of, *Boats, Books & Brushes*, New London's maritime, literary and culinary arts festival to take place in Waterfront Park September 16 to 18.

Participating artists, identified by plaques affixed to their easels, will be found painting outdoors throughout the district all week long. Artists will display their finished works for judging and sale during the festival in the gallery tent in Waterfront Park. Winners will be selected and prizes awarded on Sunday afternoon, September 18. Dennis Serrine, New York artist, illustrator, editorial cartoonist and graphic designer with ties to the region, will select the winners. For the last three years, Main Street's annual poster has been selected from Wet Paint art.

Wet Paint Chair, Jennifer MacNeill, says artists can still register at the Main Street office located at the corner of Eugene O'Neill Drive



and State Street or on the Web site. Last year two-dozen local artists entered a total of 37 pieces.

So be sure to hit the street and be on the look out for WET PAINT!

Get Fresh and Do the Stroll

By Kathleen Neal

The harvests are being brought in, the apples are ready for baking, and the grapes are beginning their transition into delectable wines. The bounty of our region is ripening all around us. Even better, there's no need to drive far to find it. Just come to our Historic Waterfront District Fall Food Stroll, Wednesday, October 19th, from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. More than 25 of the district's restaurants and eateries will offer samples, including hors d'oeuvres, entrees, desserts and drinks, featuring Connecticut grown ingredients. Coca-Cola of Southeastern New England, Cross Sound Ferry and the CT Department of Agriculture are sponsoring.



Even our entertainment will be homegrown! Enjoy the lively sounds of the Mojado Jazz Ensemble, the Can Kickers' old time music from the wilds of Southeastern Connecticut, and strolling a capella singers from Conn College.

Food strollers will receive a Food Stroll button along with a drink coupon that can be redeemed at any of the participating venues. The \$25 buttons can be purchased in advance after September 19th at the New London Main Street office at the corner of State Street and Eugene O'Neill Drive, or on-line at www.newlondonmainstreet.org.

Buttons can also be picked up at the hospitality table outside the New London Main Street office the night of the event, but in order to provide a headcount to our participating restaurants, reservations and payment are required in advance.

The new edition of the Historic Waterfront District dining guide, filled with information about downtown dining options, will be issued the night of the Stroll.

The Fall Food Stroll continues the tradition of celebrating the rich variety of downtown restaurants and food shops and has become one of our most popular events. Don't miss it!

It takes a whole town to make our downtown work!

NEW LONDON MAIN STREET

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President's Perspective

The events of this summer have energized us to look ahead with antici-



ipation and inspiration, from the energy of the entire downtown community to the CT Main Street Center (CMSC) family and friends. Efficiency and expediency were reflected in our move to the new space, with the cooperation and resourcefulness of members and contractors in the NLMS family. We were not only able to meet the deadline, but accomplished the task with a small budget.

The many accomplishments outlined during the annual meeting were humbling in that it was always the excellence of our volunteer forces

that have been our kernel of success. The annual CMSC assessment endorsed our achievements towards the revitalization efforts and bestowed recognition through awards. We have just received more exciting news of one of the largest grant awards from the Palmer Fund towards our strategic partnership with City Center District for the development of The Parade area and various other initiatives for the district. The membership growth under the leadership of Kerin Woods, Organization Committee chair, has surpassed our expectations. The Design Committee has found added vigor in several new members with design credentials. The Economic Enhancement Committee, chaired by Jerry Sinnamon, has an ambitious agenda for the upcoming year to complete the data documentation of the economic health of

downtown. The Promotion Committee under Jean Brown has again proved that our city has much to show off, and Kathleen Neal highlighted the district's culinary secrets through the successful Spring Food Stroll.

While I feel guilty about eavesdropping during conferences on downtown revitalization, I am filled with pride over the buzz about our downtown. We are determined to be a destination as an historic downtown. As the scaffolding and cranes are gradually being removed, the excitement and beauty of our downtown are revealed. Collaboration and cooperation have been our mantra to bring together the diverse forces in our downtown to return the downtown to a place of pride.

Executive Director's Update

As we all know, there is more to do in a day than time allows, and time-saving technologies, such as email, haven't helped! Now we try to do more in even less time. Downtown revitalization is a perfect reflection of modern life. Way more to do – good ideas and important initiatives – than time and resources allow. National Town Meeting, which I attended in Baltimore in May, presented us with a host of excellent ideas and strategies. There was a “clean and safe” campaign that brought an entire community together, a customer and volunteer recruiting project that worked wonders, an “Out to Lunch” event for the slowest retail day of the week, and much more.

This is the time of year when the four core committees

finalize their work plans. The Board of Directors has reiterated its strategic objective to find ways to link the waterfront and transportation area with the commercial district.

How will we narrow down all the good ideas into a focused approach to tackle this goal? Thanks to a push from New London Landmarks and a partnership with City Center District, the New London Development Corp., the City and the owner of Union Plaza, The Parade is the link that we will seek to improve. By redesigning The Parade, we



Penny and CT Main Street managers at conference in Baltimore prove “too much to do” includes fun.

hope to restore a bit of the City's history and make this “town green” more accessible and safe for pedestrians. And who knows, maybe it will become a nice place to relax, for a change!

SPOTLIGHT ON SUPPORTERS

A Truly Moving Experience

By Penny Parsekian

On June 30, thanks to the efforts of our landlord Suisman Shapiro, a group of generous contractors and 38 volunteers, New London Main Street moved into a beautiful new space.

The new space, adjacent to our old office at One Union Plaza, features a "poster wall" showcasing seven years of annual posters by local artists and a real bank vault, which we use for storage. But much had to be done before we could move in, and we needed to do it in record time. Here's who came to the rescue: The City of New London Building Department, Beaudette Professional Property Services, Mercado Electrical and Home Improvements, Harald Hefel Masonry, Mario Torres Floor Service, Ruby Glass and Jack Judge, who installed the phones. These folks worked tirelessly, night and day, to sheet rock and tape, cover exposed wires, repair broken fixtures, level and carpet a cement floor, and remove a solid steel bank depository box covered in reinforced concrete to create an entrance to the space. No challenge was too great for this team, and we are so grateful.

Why the hurry? Because our existing space had been rented. Suisman Shapiro's generosity in letting us use its unrented spaces allows us to keep our expenses down, but it means we must move on a moment's notice. We maintain and furnish the space and thus make it more appealing to prospective tenants. With



Frank McLaughlin and his son, Brendan, set up Penny's new office.



Moving Day contractors Armand Beaudette, Dan Solomons, Mario & Leo Mercado!

the new space, we have gone one step further: we have turned a so-called raw space into one that is ready for occupancy. One of our reasons for going to all this trouble, in addition to our arrangement with Suisman Shapiro, was that by staying at One Union Plaza we did not have to change our address, thus avoiding that costly, time-consuming effort.

To accomplish the actual move, we held a party, dubbed "A Moving Experience" and asked friends and members to move one item across the threshold over the course of the day. We had more volunteers than we had items to move! Check out our web site for many more photos taken before, during and after the move.

Merchants and visitors, friends, volunteers and officials who have stopped by to inspect the new place have given it a vigorous thumbs up. Hearty thanks to the contractors and volunteers who made it happen!

Harald Hefel makes way for our new entryway

NEW LONDON MAIN STREET

New London Main Street gratefully acknowledges its supporters

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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

By Jean Brown, Chair

Late summer and early fall bring plenty to do downtown, so be sure to pick up a bright pink Event Calendar card. Designed by committee member, Deirdre Cavanagh, these cards are available at local retailers and restaurants throughout the district, as well as at the New London Main Street office.

The popular downtown Historic

Waterfront District's Map and Guide has been updated in a new cream and dark green color scheme, through the tireless efforts of Gordana Vidakovic and Felix Reyes. The guide includes a map with amenities such as ATM machines and parking, and a self-guided historic walk through the district, as well as the list of businesses, locations and offerings.

Sponsors Dime Bank, the CT Humanities Council and the Radisson deserve special gratitude for rescuing this edition!

Thanks to assistance from the Food Stroll Committee, the downtown dining guide will also be updated this fall, with considerable detail about our many dining establishments, including hours and specialties.

Calling all artists! Applications are still being accepted for participation in this fall's Wet Paint Week contest, September 10-18. (See story pg. 1) Thanks to Chair Jennifer MacNeill and Gretchen Higgins, artists will once again be capturing scenes of New London's Historic Waterfront District and presenting their works to the public in a gallery tent on the *Boats, Books & Brushes* festival site.

The planning committee for December's *Celebration of Lights & Song by the Sea*, chaired by Kathy Diaz-Saavedra, is in full swing and meets monthly on the first Monday of each month. The festival will once again feature the hugely successful Living History Play, People's Choice Holiday Decorating Contest, tree lighting and, of course, Santa and many other festivities. More volunteers are needed to plan this event. Anyone interested in joining this committee or any other Promotion committee can contact the Main Street office

at 444-2489 or email Joanne Gibson at volunteer@newlondonmainstreet.org.

The Promotion Committee meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Main Street office. Come join us!

Design

By Penny Parsekian, Acting Chair

The committee is in a whirlwind of activity, due to Main Street's being recently awarded a sizable Palmer Grant to redesign The Parade and make improvements to the adjacent areas. Under the leadership of City Center District, committee members Dana Amore, Marybeth Quaadgras and Felix Reyes are working towards a detailed new design that the public and stakeholders will embrace.

Working with Charlotte Hennegan of Thames River Greenery & Beanery, attorney Jeff Hill of Suisman Shapiro and the City, we will be using some of the funding to design and create a café for the courtyard between the two Union Plaza buildings. Experts tell us that the café culture is helping to revitalize cities, and this location seems ideal to follow this strategy.

A third grant-funded project is to install signal flags on the flagpole in Waterfront Park spelling out a welcome to boaters. Any volunteers out there to help us with this one?

Gail Bartelli and her City Lights Committee will be spending the balance of the Palmer funds to complete phase III of the outline lighting project by lighting the Eugene O'Neill gateway to the district. The lights will be installed in November.

In September, the first "test" plaque in the Historic Waterfront District Heritage Trail will be installed in the sidewalk in front of the Crocker House by master mason and downtown property owner, Harald Hefel. Assuming all goes well, we will order the balance of the plaques and

notify businesses and property owners of the installation schedule. Plaques Committee Chair, Heather Grigsby, and Sylvia Malizia deserve a round of applause.

The Design Committee meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 5:45 p.m. at the Main Street office.

Economic Enhancement

By Jerry Sinnamon, Chair

The Economic Enhancement Committee is looking to businesses and restaurants in New London's Historic Waterfront District for assistance in helping the committee meet its goals and responsibilities. First, the committee encourages individuals with an economic stake in the continued revitalization of the downtown to become a member of the committee. Second, the committee is interested in hearing feedback from business owners concerning the most effective means for the committee to keep stakeholders informed of its projects, deliberations, and information sharing vehicles. For example, during the past 18 months the committee sponsored a series of "Don't Miss the Boat," workshops to inform stakeholders of plans for upcoming events, to create opportunities to discuss the plans with event sponsors, and to jointly plan merchant strategies. If there is a more convenient time for everyone to meet than 8 a.m., please let us know. We will happily accommodate the best time for everyone.

The committee's goal is to strengthen and broaden the economic base of the downtown through: collecting, interpreting and using market data; strengthening and retaining current businesses; stimulating the adaptive reuse of existing space; and recruiting new businesses into the downtown. During the next few months the committee will be continuing its efforts to "populate" the downtown database created by member Chris Miner, evaluating how it can assist City Center District to improve parking in the district, determine if the committee can obtain Community Economic Development Funds to assist its economic development activities, and continue to assist downtown businesses in taking advantage of on-going and special events in the downtown to increase business in stores and restaurants.



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WHAT'S NEW

A New Flavour in New London

By Rhonda M. Ward

A new shop has opened on Bank Street offering a very different retail experience in a world where non-standard offerings are hard to find. Flavours of Life, a retailer of fairly traded merchandise from Africa, Asia and South America, is no stranger to the New London area. Over a year ago, owners Marcie Boyer and David Lewis began selling Fair Trade merchandise at fairs



Marcie Boyer and David Lewis, owners of Flavours of Life

and festivals in New London and nearby areas. Their unique product line quickly made their tent a favorite stop. They built a following of regular customers and on July 7, 2005, they opened their Flavours of Life retail boutique at 189 Bank Street.

A World of Flavour

Walking into Flavours of Life, visitors are immediately captured by the variety of products and aromas. Flavours of Life offers African drums, clothing for adults and children, accessories such as handbags, shoes and jewelry; meditation items ranging from mats and prayer wheels to incense and singing bowls. There are baskets, bowls, and batik handled wooden spoons for the home as well as soapstone soap dishes from Africa and folkart trays from Nepal. Be sure to check out the recycled tin bowls, bookmarks and other products from Nepal and their selection of masks, as well.

Owner, David Lewis, is one of the newest members of the board of New London Main Street, bringing his many years of experience as a director at Pfizer to the organization. Marcie is currently employed by Pfizer. Their vision is to expand knowledge of Fair Trade and to grow and



expand Flavours of Life. Their motto, Three Gifts, Twice Given: Respect, Dignity, Hope, speaks to the goal of Fair Trade organizations worldwide. The proceeds from purchases at Fair Trade retailers such as Flavours of Life ensure farmers and crafters in lesser-developed regions of the world receive a fair wage for their products.

What is Fair Trade?

The world over, citizens of low-income countries produce agricultural and hand-crafted goods to sustain themselves and provide for the needs of their families. The fair trade movement aids in their efforts by providing an outlet for them to sell their products at a price that allows them to attain their goal. In 1946, the Mennonite Central Committee (the relief agency of the Mennonite Church), along with Brethren in Christ Church, established Ten Thousand Villages, a fair trade retailer, with the main goal of improving the quality of life of the artisans. Today, worldwide, fair trade sales total \$400 million a year. However, of \$3.6 trillion of all goods exchanged globally, fair trade accounts for only .01%. Sixty to seventy percent of the artisans providing fair trade hand-crafted products are women. Often these women are mothers and the sole wage earners in the home.*

Why New London?

David recalls first coming to New London over 15 years ago and staying at the Raddison because the Mystic Hilton was booked. He was told "not to go out at night," which, for his adventurous spirit was an invitation to explore. He remembers waking at 2:00 a.m. due to jetlag and walking to the pier (which had not been developed into the beautiful waterfront park that now stands), talking with local fishermen and watching the day dawn while the mist rose over the Thames river. "I fell for New London since then," he says. "We



never considered any other place," says Marcie. They credit the sense of community that New London fosters for their decision to establish their retail roots here.

Beyond Business

Their work does not stop when they close the doors of their shop. The couple has partnered with New London organizations to not only cultivate awareness of Fair Trade, but to reach out to the community to raise awareness on issues such as AIDS/HIV (their Bookmark Project donates a portion of all sales to Alliance For Living's 'Essentials for Life' program) and expand knowledge about life outside the U.S. (they have given a series of talks at Kente Cultural Center on life in Africa). In addition, they have become known and sought out for their support of environmental issues, participating annually in Connecticut College's Earth Day celebration.

Flavours of Life, located at 189 Bank Street, is open Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday from Noon to 5:00 p.m. They can be reached at 860-444-9428.

**Statistical data provided by Fair Trade Federation*

Rhonda Ward is a New London resident, poet and writer. She organizes poetry readings in the city of New London, and her work has appeared in numerous publications. Rhonda has known Marcie Boyer and David Lewis since before they began their business, helping her to bring a personal touch to this story.

VIVA VOLUNTEERS!

Why Volunteer?

Because one person can make a great difference...

HOTVOLUNTEER JOBS

Writer

Are you creative? Do you enjoy writing? Are you interested in getting to know more about New London's Historic Waterfront District, its people, businesses and downtown events? We are looking for people who have an interest in writing short articles for our newsletter, web site and the local media.



NLMS Volunteer of the Year, Diedre Cavanagh

and coordinating with the participating restaurants.

Celebration of Lights & Song by the Sea

If you'd like to be part of the committee who brings a little magic to New London on December 3, give us a call!

Banner Project

Help us pick an attractive design and sell lightpole banners to businesses to beautify the streets.

Clerical/Administrative Support

We need your help with a variety of duties in the office.

Web Site Support

Are you organized with good computer skills? We would welcome your help in keeping our web site up to date.

Fall Food Stroll

There's still time to get in on the fun! Call us if you want to get involved. We especially need help with promoting this event

Signal Flag Project

Help create a gateway in Waterfront Park by installing flags to welcome visitors to the Historic Waterfront District.

♥ Volunteering is good for the heart and the soul ♥

Reply to volunteer@newlondonmainstreet.org

Or call Joanne Gibson at 860-444-2489

WELCOME TO MEMBERS WHO JOINED OR RENEWED THIS SPRING & SUMMER

Individual

Michel Belt
Trix Bodde
Jean Brown
Gregory Coenen
Katherine Diaz-Saavedra
Deborah Donovan
Lucinda Dubey
Paul Foley
Gretchen Higgins
Raymond Koenig
Dorothy Leib
Priscilla Peabody
Lisa Perrin
Mary Ann Rocco
Mary Ann Root
Louisa Shakkour

Jerry Sinnamon

Harry Smith
Leah Spitz
Eleanor Suplee
Elizabeth Traggis
Bertha Willoughby
Kristin Edwards

Family

Elizabeth & Armand
Beaudette
Deirdre & Kevin
Cavanagh
Sandra & Rodney Chalk
Joanne & Don Gibson
Olga & William Lupien
Christina & Peter Moore

Penny Parsekian &

Geoffrey Kaufman
Darbee & David Percival
Janice & Harold
Rosenthal
Zita & Bob Smith
Kerin Woods & Karl
Sternlof

Patron/Corporation

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Elizabeth Lengyel
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Dougall
McLaughlin Companies,
LLC
Mitchell College
Nathan Hale School-
house
Pier 76 Promos, LLC
Sistare and Regan

Committee Reports

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Individuals with an interest in becoming members are encouraged to attend the committee's meetings on the third Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Main Street Office.

Organization

By Kerin M. Woods, Chair

The Organization Committee's NLMS Web site Redesign Subcommittee is finalizing changes to the home page and the contents of the New London Main Street web site, thanks to



the hard work of subcommittee members, Joshua Foley, Andrew Bell and Joyce Thomas. Andrew developed a new logo for the site in a striking cobalt blue color. Additionally, Joanne Gibson, our New London Main Street Volunteer Coordinator, has provided information to be added to the volunteer area of the web site, with the goal of better utilizing our web site as a volunteer recruitment tool. Take a look at the site, www.newlondonmainstreet.org, and let us know what you think of the new look.

The Organization Committee has begun its Membership Campaign for the 2005-2006 year, with a goal of increasing membership by 25 percent, from 200 to 250 individual, family, and business memberships. You will notice that we added a \$10 student (non-voting) category this year, with the hope of adding some of our young friends to our membership base. If you have not already done so, please get your membership renewals in, and keep recruiting new members!

The Organization Committee is also making plans for an open house to showcase Main Street's new offices for some time during the fall season. We'd love some help with this event. More information on this will be forthcoming soon.

The committee meets on the fourth Monday of each month 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!

A Spring at Fever Pitch

APRIL

Conn College Professor Abby VanSlyke, Harvard Professor Paul Groth, and Economic Enhancement Chair Jerry Sinnamon hosted a full house at Kream Coffee Bar and Lounge for the April *Don't Miss the Boat* merchant workshop featuring Groth's slide show on the evolution of storefront design. Two more workshops kept Jerry busy in May and June.

MAY

New London Main Street walked away with two state awards at the CT Main Street Center's Annual Meeting and Awards Presentation. Kathy Diaz-Saavedra was awarded (in absentia) Best Special Event for the living history play of *Lights & Song*. Kathleen Neal took Most Effective Fundraising Initiative for the Food Stroll. Liz Suson and Deirdre Cavanagh were recognized as Board Member of the Year and Volunteer of the Year, respectively.



Spring Food Stroll crowded restaurants and food shops with more than 500 people to sample the offerings. The hospitality, food and music in the streets were outstanding, thanks to the chefs, proprietors and Food Stroll Committee lead by Kathleen Neal.



Thanks to extra effort by Gretchen Higgins, Cindy Walker's poster was unveiled to an audience of over 100 members and friends at the Eighth Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony, hosted by Michael Joplin in the brilliant Sol Lewitt Lobby of the Crocker House. Tim Anderson did his usual expert job of organizing this terrific event.



JUNE

Moving Day saw volunteers outdoing themselves and contractors doing double duty as volunteers, spending a total of 65 hours to get us moved on time for National Media Connection to move into our old space the next day. Come see our new home!



YES! – I want to be a part of the New London Main Street team!

New London Main Street
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

It is not necessary to become a member in order to volunteer – everyone is welcome. Get in on the fun!

Main Street Program Committees

- Organization Committee** is our heart and soul...meets on the 4th Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m.
- Promotion Committee** reinforces our downtown as a community center and promotes retail activity...meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
- Design Committee** enhances the visual quality of our downtown...meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 5:45 p.m.
- Economic Enhancement Committee** strengthens the existing assets of the district while diversifying its economic base...meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

All regular meetings are held at the New London Main Street Office.

Opportunities

- Writer for Newsletter, Web Site and Media
- Office / Clerical assistance
- Web Site assistance
- Photographer
- Community Relations and info distribution
- Architecture and design assistance
- Membership development
- Annual Meeting Committee
- Celebration of Lights & Song by the Sea Committee
- Historic Waterfront District Food Stroll Committee
- Wet Paint Week Committee
- I just want to help somehow. Tell me where I'm needed!

New London Main Street
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- Student \$10 (non-voting)
- Individual \$25
- Family \$40
- Supporter/Small Business \$50-\$249
- Patron/Corporation \$250-\$499
- Benefactor \$500-\$1,500

All members will be listed in the New London Main Street Newsletter when they join or renew. The membership year runs from July 1 to June 30. Sponsors and Major Funders will have their name or company logo featured in the special sponsors area of our Newsletter and Web Site.

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New London Main Street, One Union Plaza, New London, CT 06320

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