



Happy  
New  
Year!

# Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 555, Willimantic, CT 06226  
[WWW.VictorianWillimantic.org](http://WWW.VictorianWillimantic.org)

## Neighborhood News

### Are We Having Fun Yet?

By Bob Horrocks

If your life is like mine you have had a very busy two and a half weeks of activity. The holiday season does this to us. It's time to be with family, friends, and neighbors and to wish each other well for the coming year. For me it brought a series of events that I refer to as ups and downs.

For Pam and me it began with a wonderful evening of appetizers and music at an acquaintance's home somewhere in Lebanon. Our host's home is located on a dark back road that can be found with the help of a map, high beams on your headlights, and a navigational (GPS) device screaming "YOU HAVE PASSED YOUR DESTINATION!" I missed finding the darkened driveway three times before venturing a mile into the woods on a dirt road. Once at our host's home, we were greeted by other guests parking their cars and commenting, "It's hard to find this place, isn't it?" Regardless, our hosts were happy to see us and the evening was wonderful. Much food, much conversation, and holiday caroling provided by seven young students from Southington High School singing in four-part harmony. Very nice...very professional. It was good to see the young singers in formal attire.

My next venture was to Terry's Transmissions in Ashford to check out a squeaking sound in my car's rear end. My estimate of the repair was on the order of \$300-\$400 dollars. Pam was impressed that I knew such things, and could project such an accurate cost estimate. I was ready for the bad news when Terry called and informed me that the squeaking was repaired for \$100. Pam dryly observed, "I guess you were wrong."

My next event was caroling on a Friday evening with a group organized by Dagmar Noll. We began at the Jillson House Museum and proceeded throughout the Father Honan housing complex on Jackson Street. My fingers and toes were numb from the cold, but my spirits were high. It was good to see our senior citizens smiling as we sang. I noticed that as I age it is becoming harder and harder to hit the high notes...as well as the low notes. This led me to ask, "Have I become a monotone?"

Christmas was spent in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, with our children and four grandchildren. Getting there was an adventure. Our car's GPS took us through New York City

and over the George Washington Bridge. "Scary!" Once there we enjoyed our family, walked on the boardwalk and on the beach, and exchanged Christmas gifts. Once again, Pam and I agreed beforehand not to give each other a gift. I always fear that she will not abide by this agreement and I will be left answering the question from my grandchildren, "Grampy, what did you give Grandmother for Christmas?"

New Year's Eve was fun at a friend's home to welcome in the new year via Newfoundland time: 12:00 Newfoundland: 10:30 pm Connecticut Time. Good food, good wine, good friends, and a nice early evening. My kind of New Year's Eve celebration.

New Year's Day was exceptional. We attended gatherings at two homes. It's wonderful to renew acquaintances at this time of the year. On the evening of January 1 Pam and I gathered with more than 100 people on Jillson Square to enjoy what will become the first annual Willimantic bonfire. This event was initiated by our own WVNA member Faith Kenton. (Should we call it the annual Faith Kenton Bonfire?) The town officials quickly picked up on her suggestion and organized a wonderful two-hour bonfire of wooden palates piled 20 feet high that burned with a blazing amount of heat that attracted motorists driving by the square. The music that was provided by a group of musicians and singers added greatly to the revelry. I consider this to be one more annual event for which our town can be proud. Next year perhaps we will see a 35-foot high pile of burning palates.

The next weekend began with my futile efforts to start my one-year-old snowblower in anticipation of the 8" snowfall to come. I've learned that uttering profanities at a machine does not help resolve the problem. I loaded the snowblower into Pam's car (large trunk) and drove it to a friend who diagnosed the problem as a clogged gas line. I then delivered the snowblower to the small engine repair expert at True Value in anticipation of a big repair, followed by a long wait, followed by a large repair bill. To my surprise, the repair service called me two hours later to tell me that the snowblower was ready to go. Repair cost: only \$42. I picked up the machine the next day with the help of my neighbor Alex and his truck. I proceeded to clear Alex's sidewalk, and my neighbor's and my 60-foot driveway. Proud and tired, I'm ready for a few days of rest.

"Have a Wonderful New Year"

## WVNA Intern

The WVNA has awarded a second scholarship/stipend of \$500 to a college student who plans to intern at one of the three local museums – WTHM, Jillson, and Railroad. This year's recipient is Kathryn Eichner, a senior with a double major in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; and English with a concentration in Creative Writing.

Kathryn is interested in learning more about the archival process in small museums, and is specifically looking to learn more about local history, worker's rights, women's history, and the Victorian Era. Her primary goal and project for her internship is to help staff and volunteers begin digitizing the archives and uploading images and other text onto the Connecticut Digital Archives (CTDA). She has been working with staff at the museum to create protocols, such as how to decide which pieces of the collection to digitize first, what content not to digitize, and developing copyright and ethics policies.

Most recently she has been working on digitizing the images of postcards and trade-cards from Willimantic, and with the Collections

Manager to scan and refine these images to make them as accurate and appealing to people looking at them online. The next step will be to create descriptions for all these images and to upload them onto our actual CTDA site.



We are thrilled that someone with Kathryn's varied work experience and interest in exploring new techniques is helping preserve vital Windham/Willimantic ephemera. In addition, she has expressed a keen desire to research and write about a local woman who has had a significant impact on this region. We have given her the names of some prominent ones who had a role in improving the community. We'd love to hear any candidates our readers may want her to consider.

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## 2017 Windham Milestone

The Town's 325th birthday celebration will be held throughout 2017. A variety of activities for community participation are being developed. New Year's Day's bonfire on the major parcel was an appropriate send off. In fact, in a recent Chronicle editorial, it was suggested that this might become an annual ritual.


The official kick-off, however, is slated to be the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Snow Ball on January 28 from 8 PM - midnight. The year-long committee, along with the volunteers, customarily creates a festive setting in the Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium. Oohs and Ahhs are routinely uttered as guests enter the transformed space. Decorations this year will be based on the theme of a birthday party with balloons and wrapped gifts. This is the WTHM's major fundraiser. Tickets are \$65 per person and are still available by contacting Lynn at 860-428-7573. See information below.

12th ANNUAL **Snow Ball**

**January 28, 2017 • 8 PM - Midnight**  
celebrates the 325th Birthday of The Town of Windham

• Dancing to the music of The Flamingos  
• Hors d'oeuvres • Dessert Bar • Cash Bar • Silent Auction

in the Bruce Bellingham Auditorium, Windham Town Hall, 979 Main St., Willimantic  
**Call 860-428-7573 to reserve tickets • \$65.00 per person**  
To benefit Windham Textile & History Museum



## Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood Association Minutes

November 27, 2016 • Jillson Museum, 627 Main Street, Willimantic, CT

President Bob Horrocks called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. Those in attendance: Jennifer Clark, Faith Kenton, Pam and Robert Horrocks, Claire and Doug Lary, Barbara and Jim Lacey, Shirley Mustard, and Pam Shooks.

Thanks were extended to Shirley Mustard, Lynn Duval, Claire Lary and Dean Williams for the November Newsletter. Appreciation was expressed to Jennifer Clark for assuming the role of Social Chairperson. Congratulations to Kathryn Eichner (UCONN) who has received a \$500.00 scholarship (stipend) for her work as an intern at the Windham Textile and History Museum. Faith and Steve Kenton were thanked for hosting the Potluck Supper last month. Also, thanks to Shirley Mustard and Dean Williams for hosting the Potluck Supper today.

**Review of 2016:** The Progressive Dinner held on March 19 was well attended. The Horrocks attended the Roseland Cottage Open House in July. The Garden Party was on August 28. The Victorian Home Tour (June 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) included the following events:

- Home Owners Reception (750 Main Street)
- Lantern Walk — Hill section, Bev York
- Friday Brass Band concert at the Congregational Church
- Home Tours—Willimantic & Windham Center - 10 homes
- Victorian Tea at Dwight Chaffee House (Lary Home)
- Steam Punk (Tea Pot Races & photo opportunities)
- Town Hall Tour
- Horse-drawn wagon
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church — Documentary video - J.Alden Weir
- Wright Garden Tour and Lecture
- Antique cars on display
- Architectural Lecture — Bev York (Kramer)

To date, Bob reported we have had tours during the past 17 years at more than 65 different homes! A brief discussion that followed about which events were well attended mentioned that two sittings of Teas continue to be popular.

### DISCUSSION: Setting Our Course for the future

**2017 Events:** The Home Tour Committee will meet soon to discuss possibilities for the 2017 Home Tour. Different things to do were mentioned and included varying thoughts such as one day only on Saturday for the home tours or fewer homes. Willimantic and Windham Center homes perhaps alternating years with South Windham homes. Holding a session on "If this House Could Talk" in another month might be more appropriate. The Riverfront could be used for an activity. A Victorian Picnic with lemonade and dessert was suggested. The local Arts and Craft houses could be one focus. The musicians continue to be a welcome addition. A train ride, row boating on the Willimantic River, or Hot Air Balloon Rides could be parts of a program to consider. The Town Hall tour was popular and should be continued. A Vaudeville show by the Theater Guild performers was suggested. A Magic Act or a Juggler could be incorporated as well.

### Proposals for 2017:

Progressive Dinner , Saturday, March 18, 2107 .

Victorian Home Tour Weekend— June 1, 2, 3, 4.

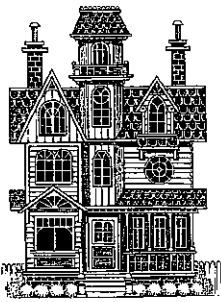
Home Tour Committee: Chair, Pam Horrocks; Jennifer Clark, Lynn Duval, Kathy Miller.

Garden Party, Saturday, August 20 or 27, 2017

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At 4:30 p.m., a Power Point Show was presented by President Horrocks on Victorian Mansions and The Victorian Guide to Ideal Victorian Women. This was entertaining and interesting.

At 4:45 the meeting was adjourned and everyone was invited to the Potluck Supper at 266 Walnut Street.

Respectfully submitted, Pam Shooks, Secretary



# Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood Association

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Willimantic, CT 06226

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## Please call on the WVNA Officers & Board for Information or Assistance:

President, Bob Horrocks	456-1666
Vice President/Secretary, Barbara Lacey	456-1214
Treasurer, Claire Lary	456-3088
Membership, Pam Horrocks*	456-1666
Home Tour & Newsletter, Lynn Duval*	456-4476
Publicity, Public Relations, Newsletter Shirley Mustard	423-1481
Social, Jennifer Clark	208-6257
Legal, Charles Krich	456-8874

### Board Members

Sue Humes	423-0576
James Lacey	456-1214
Gordon MacDonald	423-8845

\* Non-voting members

### Photo Credits:

Bob Horrocks

The Willimantic Victorian  
Neighborhood Association  
is the key to communication in  
regard to the Hill Section,  
the Home Tour, Economic  
Development and a better quality of  
life in our town.

Join today if you have not already  
done so. Send us your ideas and  
thoughts, participate in the  
meetings and events.

Be a part of this wonderful  
community and this extraordinary  
neighborhood.

Call Bob Horrocks (860) 456-1666.

## Calendar of Events

Next Meeting of the  
Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood  
Association

Sunday, January 22, 3:30 pm

Leaf and Flour

45 High St.

Speaker: Kathryn Eichner

2016 WVNA Scholarship Recipient

"My Work at the

Windham Textile & History Museum"

Also: Video Documentaries: Victorian Customs

Potluck Supper to follow